OCTOBER 2019

AUSTRALIA

PLAYBOY

TALKING TABOO
SASHEER ZAMATA & JOEL KIM BOOSTER REVISIT THEIR SEX ED EXPERIENCES

FACES OF RESILIENCE
CELEBRATING THE PROGRESS OF THE TREVOR PROJECT

20 QUESTIONS
WITH MAREN MORRIS, THE MUSICIAN WHO'S BREAKING RECORDS!

IN SEARCH OF THE #20BITEEN MAN
WE FIND OUT WHY MALE BISEXUALITY IS STILL SHROUDED IN TABOO

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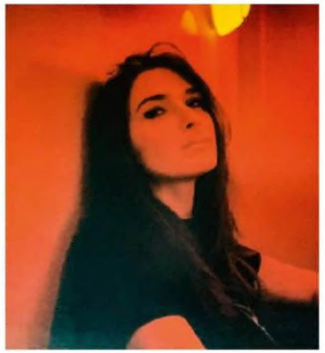

ANDREA DOMANICK
The journalist behind this issue's 20Q is the former West Coast editor of Noisey and has lent her byline to Rolling Stone, Spin and the Los Angeles Times. With an editorial sweet spot that lands, in her words, at "the intersection of music, culture and social justice," Domanick was an ideal writer to sit with stratospheric country star Maren Morris for a lively discussion on gender, genres and the one thing no man should ever forget to do in the bedroom.

IAN KARMEL
An Emmy-nominated comedian and head writer for The Late Late Show With James Corden, Karmel is also the first ever guest editor of Playboy's Party Jokes. ("Extremely, extremely horny" was his emotional response to the offer.) "Since it's PLAYBOY, I thought it would be fun to have only women contribute," he says. "Everyone I asked was excited to do it, except my ex-girlfriend. Which...thank God. It would be hard not to read into those."

ANITA LITTLE
"I love the juxtaposition of Tarana Burke and PLAYBOY," says Little of this issue's Playboy Interview. "It will be so unexpected to so many, and that's what makes her inclusion even more necessary." Speaking of unexpected juxtapositions, before becoming a PLAYBOY features editor, Little — whose editorial contributions to this issue also include Let's Play, The Future of Sex Toys Is Gender Neutral and the BDSM pictorial Give Me Mor — spent three years at Ms. magazine.

GRAHAM DUNN
Citing nature and nostalgia as themes that inform his work, Dunn is known for his ability to capture strikingly intimate moments. We tapped the longtime PLAYBOY contributor to photograph Tyler Blackburn on the precipice of a new chapter in the actor's life. "Tyler did this cool switching between contemplative moments and direct glimpses of himself," says Dunn of the shoot for Down to Earth. "It made for a really personal portrait session."

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BY **SUZANNAH WEISS**

the future of sex toys is gender neutral

BUTT PLUGS ARE NO LONGER ONLY FOR GAY MEN, AND VIBRATORS AREN'T JUST FOR WOMEN

As a kid, I was expected to play with "girls' toys" like dolls and horses, but I also enjoyed "boys' toys" like race cars and action figures. As an adult, when sex toys became my playthings of choice, I found there wasn't much wiggle room: The ones designed for my body were pink or purple, often with photos of women in sexy underwear on the package.

In recent years major retailers have begun to offer gender-neutral products or to market existing ones as gender neutral. Target has removed gender-based signs from its kids' sections, Amazon no longer uses gender filters in its toy listings, and the Disney Store has stopped labeling children's costumes as either "boys" or "girls." But one product category has remained stubbornly gendered: sex toys. Many adult companies are surprisingly regressive in assuming that certain toys are made for certain bodies and certain bodies map onto certain identities. Slowly, though, that's also changing — and, in the process, changing how we think about sex, gender and pleasure.

Carol Queen, resident sexologist for the feminist sex shop Good Vibrations, says her customers have long been vocal about their desire for less-gendered toys. Some of those customers are among the increasingly visible population of trans and non binary people. A recent study from the Williams Institute at UCLA found that the estimated percentage of adults in the United States who identify as transgender has doubled in roughly the past decade. These people may feel excluded by toys that come in pink pouches emblazoned with photos of women just because they're designed for vulvas.

"Labeling toys by gender puts the power in the sellers' hands to make assumptions about buyers based on their gender," says Ambrose Heffner, a trans man. "Labeling toys by function puts the power in buyers' hands to make a judgment call and make their own empowered decisions regarding their body and sexuality."

Restrictive labeling affects cisgender customers as well. "Our

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SCOTTIE CAMERON**

Above: A vibrator for females and a masturbation aid for males, this sex toy is ideal for couples' play but can also be used solo. Rianne S Duo Vibe.
Left: This small but mighty spherical toy packs a powerful punch, and all that's required for enjoyment is nerve endings. Unbound Babes Bean.

Right: Designed for long-distance couples, the Lush 2 allows users to control the vibration intensity via cell phone. Lovense Lush 2.

cis-women customers have long disliked the 'porno lady' boxes because they were being sold an image of what a woman should look like along with their vibrator," Queen explains. Genderneutral toys appeal to people who want to experiment with new sensations but feel intimidated by — or are simply unaware of — products marketed to a different demographic. "There are many men out there who could benefit from using toys marketed to women but haven't because the toys are bright pink or designed to look like a realistic penis," says Daniel Saynt, founder of the sexual-wellness digital agency NSFW Creative.

To meet these customers' demands, brands are tailoring their colors, designs and packaging to a broader range of buyers. Over the past few years, Lovense has released at least two toys, the wand vibrator Domi and the vibrating butt plug Hush, exclusively in black — a stark contrast to its couples' set from 2013: a pink vibrator named Nora and a white masturbation sleeve named Max. Anal-toy seller b-Vibe offers most of its products in black, and sexual-wellness brand Maude offers a plain gray personal massager simply called "vibe." Dame Products, which launched the couples' vibrator Eva to close the pleasure gap between men and women, now markets its products as sex aids for all people with vulvas.

Some companies have even designed new products to work on a variety of bodies. MysteryVibe's Crescendo vibrator folds and twists into different shapes so users can stimulate multiple body parts. Customers appreciate the Crescendo — which, according to MysteryVibe, doubled the company's sales between 2016 and 2018 — because they can use it not just on themselves but also on their partners, regardless of how they identify. "The fact that you can have one multipurpose, fully adaptable product helps shift your focus off the need for the 'correct' toy for a specific region and allows the user to be more creative in the application of it — and thus more creative and engaged in sex in general," says chief marketing officer Dominnique Karetsos.

Lelo's Transformer, which morphs into a rabbit vibrator, cock ring, prostate massager and more, raked in more than $1million in its first year, according to the company's brand expert, Stu Nugent. Users like that it isn't in your face about being gender neutral, he explains. "Most nonbinary customers don't want to be reminded of gender all the time."

It's not just sex-toy inventors hopping on the gender neutral bandwagon; some online marketplaces, including Wild Flower, Spectrum Boutique and Vibrant, avoid grouping products by gender or mentioning gender in their descriptions. "Wild Flower has grown by five times its size over the last year alone, and based on customer feedback, a lot of that growth is in part because of how accessible toys become once gender is removed," says Amy Boyajian, Wild Flower co-founder and chief executive officer. "Customers are getting the products they desire easily while also being introduced to new options." (Boyajian also notes that gender- neutral sex toys push back against the "pink tax" — the higher prices typically placed on female-gendered products.)

Many retailers similarly avoid labels such as "sex toys for women" and "sex toys for men" in their signage and conversations with customers, says Lynn Comella, author of *Vibrator Nation: How Feminist Sex-Toy Stores Changed the Business of Pleasure*. " Some of the most interesting conversations I had with sex-toy retailers and buyers were about 'queering' sex toys and breaking open boxes that didn't need to be there," she says.

Although the "gender neutral" label often attracts a wider customer base, many — one could argue all — toys originally made for one gender are already gender neutral. Lelo, for example, says it initially marketed its Mona as a G-spot massager but saw an uptick in sales after promoting it as a prostate massager. "While it's possible to make a versatile sex toy and phrase everything vaguely to avoid making assumptions or dictating how a product should be used, you also occasionally have to say very directly, 'Hey, try putting this thing directly up your butt,' " says Nugent.

Below: This weighted anal toy provides the sensation of penetration, while the slick silicone exterior makes for comfortable entry. By Vibe Snug Plug 3.

Above: For the adventurous, this double-ended vibrator can easily morph into a cock ring, a rabbit vibe, a clitoral massager and just about anything else, with a few simple twists. It can be as flexible and versatile as the sexual identity of its users. Lelo Transformer.

While such marketing may seem progressive, sex toys are actually returning to their roots. As far back as the late 1800s, vibrator ads featured both men and women, according to Hallie Lieberman, author of *Buzz: A Stimulating History of the Sex Toy*. "It wasn't until the 1960s and 1970s, with some in the feminist movement like Betty Dodson turning vibrators into symbols of female empowerment, that they got gendered more female," she says.

The evolution goes on. The first gender-neutral toys had generic bases with male and female attachments, but as more people identify outside the gender binary, brands are accommodating a broader range of identities. "You can sell a genderneutral toy to a much larger market than you can a gendered toy, so there's more opportunity to make money," Lieberman says.

Perhaps one day it will become common knowledge that sex aids of all varieties, just like clothes or children's toys, can be enjoyed by anyone, regardless of their anatomy or identity. Personally, the chance to use gender-neutral sex toys has helped me feel freer to forge my own identity, just as the ability to play with dinosaurs did when I was a kid. ■

his & hers

A healthy sex life isn't reserved for any one gender—so why is it harder for women to have one? We size up the past, present and future of sexual health

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Pure Food and Drug Act into law, leading to the creation of the FDA. The goal was to better protect public health, but the agency would go on to disregard half the U.S. population in clinical studies for the next 87 years, until finally changing its guidelines in 1993 to encourage researchers to include both sexes. The result? Decades of medical advancements based on male bodies.

Can't get it up? We have pills for that. Coming too soon? Not at all? The best scientists have been addressing men's bedroom woes for decades. Meanwhile, women's sexual health has received a fraction of the attention, perhaps because policy makers don't understand the terminology: Mention women's sexual health and you'll likely hear more about abortion than orgasms.

In reality, women's sexual health includes everything from low sexual desire to the inability to climax. But few of these issues have attracted scientific innovation and advertising dollars on the scale of erectile dysfunction. This gap will widen next April, when generic ED pills are expected to flood the market after Pfizer's 2002 patent for Viagra expires.

Female reproductive health is also suffering. In February, the Trump administration issued its Title X "gag rule," which bars clinics that provide abortion services from receiving federal funds. A federal judge blocked the new regulation in April, but its future remains uncertain, and clinics that treat STDs and provide family-planning services, such as Planned Parenthood, could still face closure. The fate of the Affordable Care Act (and with it, access to affordable birth control) remains in jeopardy as long as Republicans control the White House and the Senate.

There is some good news: The cultural boom in self-care and the business boom in Big Pharma–free health could help level the field for women's sexual wellness. Better news: The booms are piquing the interest of men, who increasingly want to have more control in managing their health. For example, according to a March 2019 online poll conducted by Playboy, when it comes to male birth control, a majority of male respondents reported being interested in using methods other than condoms.

As the government continues to play a role in regulating—ahem, *protecting*—our bodies, we wanted to chart the current gaps in sexual health and take a look ahead. Consider it a remedial course in sexual education.

FORECASTING THE FUTURE OF SEX

2019
On top of unveiling the Title X "domestic gag rule" in February, the Trump administration proposed earmarking $75 million for the 2020 fiscal year to support abstinence-only sex-ed programs.

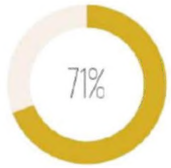
2020
Democrats vying for the White House are expected to campaign on repealing the 43-year-old Hyde Amendment, which forbids the federal government from funding abortion services except in very narrow circumstances.

2023
The global market for erectile-dysfunction treatments is projected to reach $4.25 billion by 2023, in part due to reduced stigma and wider use of telemedicine.

"SEXUAL HEALTH IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OVERALL HEALTH, AND WOMEN'S SEXUALITY, IN PARTICULAR, HAS BEEN WOEFULLY UNDERSTUDIED."

—MAYA DUSENBERY, author of *Doing Harm: The Truth About How Bad Medicine and Lazy Science Leave Women Dismissed, Misdiagnosed and Sick*

NUMBERS CAN'T FAKE IT

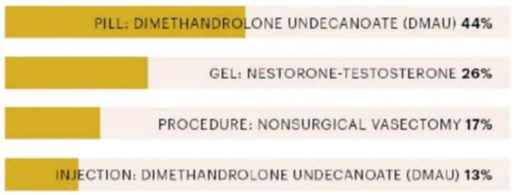


According to a recent Playboy poll, almost three quarters of male respondents are open to using male birth control pills.

Even so, men have only one ninth as many FDA-approved contraceptive options as women do.

Meanwhile, men have at least 19 FDA-approved choices to treat sexual dysfunction; women have a whooping total of three.

Could male birth control disrupt the condom market? We polled our male social media followers on which options they'd be most willing to try.


PILL: DIMETHANDROLONE UNDECANOATE (DMAU) 44%
GEL: NESTORONE-TESTOSTERONE 26%
PROCEDURE: NONSURGICAL VASECTOMY 17%
INJECTION: DIMETHANDROLONE UNDECANOATE (DMAU) 13%

Median amount allocated from the National Institutes of Health to first-time researchers, by gender:

MEN $166K WOMEN $127K

Gender of practicing physicians, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation:

64% MEN **36% WOMEN**

SLANTS & STANCES

"DESPITE THE CONSIDERABLE PREVALENCE OF DISTRESSING LOW DESIRE IN YOUNG WOMEN AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR LIVES, THIS CONDITION REMAINS UNDER-RECOGNIZED, UNDERDIAGNOSED AND UNDERTREATED."

—JAMES A. SIMON, president of the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health

"SEXUAL HEALTH IS TARGETED THROUGH GENDERED BODIES. I CAN'T THINK OF A SPACE THAT HELPS WOMEN WITH PELVIC PAIN OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD. THAT'S THE MISOGYNY OF THE MEDICAL FIELD."

—BIANCA LAUREANO, co-founder of the Women of Color Sexual Health Network

2025
Research and consulting firm Frost & Sullivan predicts that the women's health and technology trade (dubbed "femtech") could balloon to a $50 billion industry by 2025.

2026
The global sexual-wellness market is projected to grow to $123 billion by 2026, partly due to NGOs' continued promotion of contraceptive use to prevent HIV and other STDs around the world.

IN EQUAL MEASURE?

	Female Birth Control	Male Sexual Dysfunction
THE COST	Planned Parenthood prices a tubal ligation, the female version of a vasectomy, as high as $6,000. Women receive them three times more often than men undergo the less invasive male procedure.	The price of Viagra varies by insurance plan and pharmacy, but Costco lists 100-milligram pills of sildenafil, the only generic form of Viagra allowed on the market, at $3.53 a pop.
THE MARKET	In 1960, Enovid became the first FDA-approved oral contraceptive for women. Fifty-nine years later, there is no male equivalent.	Viagra went on sale in 1998. It would be nearly 20 years until Addyi, the first drug for women's sexual dysfunction, hit the market.
THE LAW	Late last year, the Trump administration attempted to circumvent the ACA by letting private employers deny birth-control coverage based on religious beliefs or "moral convictions."	The ACA deems prescription coverage an "essential health benefit," which means Viagra and sildenafil can be legally covered by private insurance providers.
THE REACTION	After Trump's election in 2016, Harvard Medical School researchers reported a rise in the number of privately insured women seeking long-term birth control, such as IUDs and implants.	When a bill banning abortion after about six weeks passed in Georgia, State Representative Da'shun Kendrick drafted a "testicular Bill of Rights" that would require men to get their sex partners' approval before filling a Viagra prescription.

KEEP IT UP

As self-affirmation memes and ads for designer vibrators, cannabis lubes and sexperts take over social media (have you visited the Explore tab of your Instagram lately?), internet companies are innovating where government has stagnated. They're also advocating a holistic approach to sexual health—aligning the mind and body to achieve a better libido—which has resulted in a market predicted to grow by billions in the next decade. Here are three companies making big waves in the new business of pleasure, plus a preview of Playboy's foray into the market, set to hit stores this summer.

Hims/Hers

These smartly art-directed subscription services are redefining self-care for men and women. Offering hair growth and anti-aging regimens for both sexes, Hims-branded sildenafil for men, and prescriptions for birth control (in rainbow packaging), Addyi and propranolol—a non-FDA-approved option for performance anxiety—for women, the company uses telemedicine to connect consumers to physicians and monthly plans.

Goop

Gwyneth Paltrow's lifestyle brand has been doling out expertise on beauty, fashion, food and travel since 2008, but more recently the company, reportedly worth $250 million, has become famous for its quirky sex-based product reviews. With the option to buy straight from the website, readers can shop an array of sex toys, from the Vesper Vibrator necklace ($149) to the Sado-Chic Chain set ($1,500), alongside yoga pants and rice cookers.

Roman

Co-founded in 2017 by erectile-dysfunction sufferer Zachariah Reitano, Roman offers personalized treatments for sexual dysfunction, hair loss, genital herpes and even nicotine addiction. Each program is uploaded to an app that monitors users' progress. The Morning Glory app, for example, tracks the frequency of morning erections—a method Roman claims can be helpful in determining a patient's needs.

Playboy Wellness

The Rabbit knows about rising to the occasion, which is why we've partnered with a leading producer to create two daily supplements for men to increase libido, decrease sexual anxiety and promote skin, hair and nail health. Hitting Vitamin Shoppe in July are our Legendary Sexual Wellness Support and our Testosterone Booster; both use nutraceutical formulas of amino acids, vitamins and antioxidants to jump-start the body.

Shame, misinformation, indomitable hormones — **Sasheer Zamata** and **Joel Kim Booster** take us back to school

MY SEX EDUCATION

THE ONLY THING MORE TERRIFYING THAN SEX-ED SCARE TACTICS IS THE WAY I TREATED MY MECHANICAL CHILD

BY **SASHEER ZAMATA**

I was walking down the street not too long ago, and I overheard a full adult woman say, "I didn't know you could get pregnant on your first try!" That's when I realized the world desperately needs better sex education.

I'm including myself in that statement. I had a mortifying moment in college when one of my friends explained how the guy she was sleeping with only wanted to do "doggy style." I responded, "That's crazy. He only wants to do anal?" There was silence, and one of my friends slowly asked, "So…do you think when dogs have sex they're always doing it anally?" And I guess when you say it out loud, it sounds dumb. Of course they're not always doing it anally — most of them save that for birthdays and bribes. But I wasn't thinking of the logistics of canine coitus. I honestly wasn't thinking of sex at all, because I was taught not to.

I was raised in Indiana, and my sex education was pretty much "don't." I remember a slide show of STIs in my middle school health class featuring images of cauliflower sprouting out of someone's ass, or blood and pus oozing from someone's eyeball, and those were used as evidence for why we should abstain. I went to a public school, so they weren't telling us to save ourselves for religious reasons — they just weren't telling us anything.

Our class participated in the Baby Think It Over program, in which students take care of a robot baby to learn how hard it is to care for a human baby. I guess we were supposed to "think over" whether or not it's worth it to have kids while still in school. I had killed multiple Tamagotchis by this point, so I wasn't feeling good about my chances of being a good robot mom, but I wanted to at least pass the assignment.

The baby had a computer in it to record how often I fed, held, changed and nurtured it (which is kind of what I currently do in my relationship). It would also cry, and I just had to guess why (which is what my partner does in our relationship). It was so annoying. Sometimes I just let the baby wail because I was busy with other homework. There was one day when I ran to the bus while holding my bundle of joy, and her head was flopping back and forth, so that probably wasn't good. At the end of the experiment, the teacher pulled together all the counts of neglect and abuse to give me a grade. Apparently I had a lot of counts of neglect and abuse. Someone from Child Protective Services — I'm hoping an intern and not someone who could be helping real children — came to my school to talk to all the bad student-parents. They took me into a room and warned me that if this were a real baby, they would take her from me. And my response was, "Good! I didn't ask for this baby!" They didn't care about my protest.

I wish I had said, "You know what would've been more useful? Telling me how not to have a baby instead of showing me how hard life is with one. Embarrassing me in class by making me roll a condom over a banana so I'm not too embarrassed to do it with an actual penis in front of me. Giving me language I can use to ask my partners about their sexual history and health so I'm not speechless in the moment. Teaching me that sex can be an enjoyable experience between consenting parties and doesn't have to be a shameful, detrimental act."

It can be easy not to have a baby if you don't want one — you just need access to resources and information, which is getting tougher these days. Let's keep spreading knowledge so people can have more control of their lives and know how to get rid of the cauliflower in their butt. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RICK RODNEY**

No one had to teach me how to come. Every afternoon, I'd lie on the cold linoleum of my family's bathroom, turn on the shower for sonic camouflage and get to work on myself. Like a prodigy with no formal training, I was a natural. Maybe I couldn't read sheet music, and the finger placement was definitely off, but lying there, clutching my instrument, I learned what my body was capable of.

My parents, blue- collar conservative Christians, homeschooled me for most of my adolescence in an attempt to protect me from the secular world and its corrupting notions of liberalism and science. For their own edification they purchased a book on talking to your son about sex, which I would secretly take from their shelves and study solemnly in my bed at night. There I discovered that my white pee was actually called "semen" and, in the final and shortest chapter, titled simply "Homosexuality," that the urges I'd been visualizing while making the white pee (fueled by old Archie comic books) were unnatural and wrong. Turned out all those tiny, messy miracles weren't miracles at all.

If instinct was my teacher, then shame became my tutor. In the years that followed, I'd spend approximately 15 minutes of each day on that bathroom floor and the rest of my waking hours working out how and when I'd be going to hell for it.

Soon I graduated from the bathroom to a corner of our basement, where my parents had foolishly placed our brand-new computer. The creaky stairwell served as a de facto lookout while I entered such imaginative terms into the pre-Google search bar as gay and *gay sex*. In the waning days of dial-up it wasn't unusual for me to wait a full 20 minutes as our Dell PC loaded, line by line, a horrifically photoshopped image of George Clooney receiving a blow job from Brad Pitt. I learned about anal sex from erotic gay fan fiction, which always made it seem so simple and spontaneous. Obi-Wan never once shat on Qui-Gon's dick. Maybe it was the Force.

When I turned 16, my parents reluctantly sent me off to public school. My entry into the real world would coincide with our school district's mandatory sex-ed class, years too late to be anything but an exercise in not making eye contact with the teacher. By this point all of us had enrolled in a rigorous course of our own design, consisting of facts and fictions cobbled together from internet porn and various misremembered half-truths some older brother brought home from college. It was like a game of telephone played by hundreds of teenage boys with wild ideas about the viability of their sperm in a hot tub.

After little more than a month at public school, I tearfully came out to a friend during lunch period. A short lifetime of shame and mortal fear — I set it all aside in that moment because the smell of Axe body spray got me hard. Sadly, it still does. The sex-ed class came to an end, but my education did not. (That same year I met my first boyfriend, who was also the first man I heard whisper "teeth" with erotic caution as I gave head for the first time, a VHS tape of his eighth-grade production of *The Music Man* playing in the background.) Every new experience, even the many, *many* humiliating ones, felt like a revelation.

"That was sex!" I would say to myself. I eventually realized that it wasn't, but I would go on to learn things they forgot to teach us: about consent, about the different ways we experience desire, about the ways our bodies betray us. But I still go back to those teenage moments — fucking in the backseat of a Pontiac Sunfire parked inconspicuously in an empty Target lot — when it all felt miraculous again. ■

FOR AMERICAN KIDS LIKE ME, SEX ED HAS ALWAYS BEEN EQUAL PARTS CLASSROOM AND SCHOOLYARD (WITH A HEALTHY DASH OF BASEMENT REC ROOM)

BY **JOEL KIM BOOSTER**

TRACEY LEA

@TRACEYLEAPHOTO

Photography by **MIKE COHEN**
MUA **LINDSEY HACKETT**
PR **@LEO.ALDERMAN @LSAPUBLICATIONS**

Tell us something surprising about you
I'm a fashion and beauty photographer. I also love to bake.

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Yes, of course!

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
I absolutely love to have my photo taken. I could do it all day and night!

What are some of your hobbies?
Keeping fit, astrology, travelling, the theatre, cooking and being creative

Turn ons?
The ocean, hot destinations, delicious food and feeling strong and healthy

Turn offs?
Men in sandals, people who don't floss and bad table manners

Describe your perfect date.
A romantic dinner in a beautiful setting, delicious food, wine and interesting company __

Which capital city would you like to visit and why?
I would love to visit anywhere in South America and it's pretty much the only country I haven't been to apart from Columbia. Argentina would definitely be on my list as it's supposed to have the best BBQ's in the world.

Do you feel more like a city person or a country person?
I'm definitely a big city girl. After I left Sydney I moved to New York and now I live in London so that says it all. However, 2 or 3 days in the country is perfect.. Any longer and I get bored.

What would you say is your best feature?
My natural breasts

Favourite shoot location?
So far I would have to say Mauritius where we took these pictures, although the weather was a challenge. I would like to shoot in the Maldives next time so stay tuned!

RESILIENCE

ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STONEWALL RIOTS, WE JOIN THE TREVOR PROJECT TO CELEBRATE HOW FAR WE'VE COME — AND RAISE AWARENESS OF THE WORK THAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE TO SECURE EQUALITY FOR ALL

BY **NICO LANG**

Fifty years ago, Larry Littlejohn wrote a letter to PLAYBOY condemning a method of treatment intended to "cure" homosexuality. Littlejohn, who served as president of San Francisco's Society for Individual Rights, described the case of a 22-year-old patient "treated for transvestism" through aversion techniques. After showing the patient photos of himself dressed in women's clothing, Littlejohn claimed, doctors injected the individual with apomorphine. Sometimes used to treat Parkinson's disease, the drug also induces "headaches, nausea and vomiting."

"It had been planned to put him through 72 'trials,' " Littlejohn wrote, "but the last four had to be abandoned because he became irritable, confused and hostile; developed rigors, high temperature and high blood pressure; suffered from impaired coordination and was unable to maintain a normal conversation."

Although doctors had declared the patient "cured" of his condition, Littlejohn noted that another person subjected to electroshock therapy, this time as treatment to cure homosexuality, "wept for half an hour after each session." He eventually refused further sessions after "rushing out of the room in tears."

"I cannot see where this form of treatment differs from the tortures of the Inquisition or the brainwashing of the Communists," Littlejohn concluded.

His letter to the editor was published in March 1969 — four months before the Stonewall riots, during which activists including Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera fought back against police brutality at gay bars in New York City's West Village. But 50 years after the six-day protest kick-started what would become the modern LGBTQ movement, the treatment Littlejohn described remains legal in 34 states in this country. New York passed statewide legislation to ban the practice only in January.

Today such treatments are widely known as conversion therapy, though they're sometimes referred to as "reparative therapy" or "orientation change." The terms refer to a loosely associated range of practices including everything from shock treatment and aversion therapy to waterboarding and ice baths. In the vast majority of cases, though, conversion therapy takes the form of talk therapy wherein LGBTQ individuals meet with a counselor or pastor who teaches them that who they are is "sick" and "wrong."

At the time of Littlejohn's letter, homosexuality was considered a "mental illness"; since then, the American Medical Association and other organizations have evolved. In its *Journal of Ethics*, the AMA has condemned conversion therapy a s harmful and ineffective, claiming it leads to depression, anxiety and increased risk of suicidal ideation. Despite such cautionary assessments, an estimated 700,000 people in the United States have been subjected to the practice. Without decisive action, in the coming years thousands more LGBTQ youth will join the ranks of (often traumatized) conversion-therapy survivors.

To honor the decades of advocacy against conversion therapy, PLAYBOY partnered with the Trevor Project — a national LGBTQ youth suicide-prevention organization and architect of the "50 Bills 50 States" campaign to ban conversion therapy nationwide. On the following pages we spotlight and celebrate six activists and survivors who are raising awareness of its impact.

Their stories, each representative of a different experience with conversion therapy and presented alongside stunning portraits by queer photographer Ryan Pfluger, are a reminder of what Franklin E. Kameny, co-founder and president of the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., wrote in PLAYBOY five decades ago. (His letter to the editor ran alongside Littlejohn's in response to April 1967 and August 1968 *Playboy Forum* comments made by behavioral researchers Gerald Davison and David Barlow, who believed it was possible to recondition "sexual deviation.") Kameny, whose organization was a branch of one of the first LGBTQ advocacy groups in the U.S., declared that homosexuality didn't need to be cured.

"Gay is good," he said.

These inspiring leaders are working to ensure society finally heeds that message.

the advocate

sam brinton

alexandria, virginia

Sam Brinton would be the first to admit they are an unlikely face of today's movement to ban conversion therapy. Brinton, who identifies as gender fluid and uses gender-neutral pronouns, received a master's degree in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2013 and started a nonprofit devoted to clean-energy advocacy soon after. "My technical passion is solving nuclear waste and disarming nuclear bombs," they say. "I've been doing it for more than a decade."

But two years before graduation, Brinton took on a very different kind of advocacy. As a conversion-therapy survivor, they began lobbying states to ban the practice, which was still legal in all 50 states in 2011. California became the first state to outlaw orientationchange efforts affecting LGBTQ youth the following year.

While advocates and survivors have been fighting against conversion therapy for decades — through litigation and storytelling, and by persuading major medical and mental health organizations to cease treating a person's sexual orientation or gender identity as a pathology — recent years have seen the practice achieve unprecedented levels of public attention and legislative progress. Today's advocacy landscape, Brinton notes, is practically unrecognizable in comparison with that of just eight years ago.

In 2019, the top Google search results for "conversion therapy" are resource guides and info sheets from LGBTQ organizations including the Trevor Project and Born Perfect, an initiative founded by the National Center for Lesbian Rights. But in 2011, Brinton says, the top 10 or 20 entries on Google were for conversion-therapy providers seeking patients. At the time, the LGBTQ movement was largely focused on marriage equality, so it was "hard to find anyone who would listen."

"Most people didn't think conversion therapy was still happening, and most people didn't think it was worthy of attention," Brinton explains, adding that advocacy efforts in 2011 focused on "trying to find someone who cared." But by 2017, the movement to ban conversion therapy had gained enough momentum that Brinton left nuclear engineering to work as the head of advocacy and government affairs for the Trevor Project. Advances since then have been significant. When Brinton brought the 50 Bills 50 States project to the LGBTQ youth organization two years ago, just five states — California, New Jersey, Oregon, Illinois and Vermont —had taken action to outlaw orientation-change efforts. Four states moved to ban conversion therapy in 2017, and five followed suit in 2018.

At press time, two states — New York and Massachusetts — had taken action this year to protect LGBTQ youth from "gay cure" treatments, and two more may soon join them. Colorado, led by Jared Polis, the country's first openly gay governor, is expected to enact a ban this year, and Maine governor Janet Mills has pledged her support for a conversion-therapy ban should legislation reach her desk.

Brinton credits that progress to the tireless advocacy of conversion-therapy survivors. But according to Brinton, misconceptions about the treatment persist.

"So many people think that because this is being done by a licensed therapist, it's effective and it works," they say. "Every major medical association and organization has come out against conversion therapy, and yet there's this pervasive idea that because the person who is doing it has the word doctor before their name, this must be good."

Brinton, who was subjected to shock therapy at the age of 11, won't be satisfied until conversion therapy is treated the same as smoking. "The Surgeon General has a warning on every pack of cigarettes," they say. "I want every single person across the country to know how bad conversion therapy is for their health."

In the meantime, Brinton keeps, above their desk, a memento of how far the movement has come. In 2015, when President Barack Obama came out against conversion therapy, it was reported above the fold of *The New York Times* — marking the first time a sitting president condemned the practice. Since then, Brinton has begun collecting pens from all the governors — seven Republicans and nine Democrats—who have signed conversion-therapy bans.

Brinton is hoping to add 34 more someday. If the past eight years are any indication, it may be sooner than anyone could have imagined.

the celebrity

dusty ray bottoms

new york, new york

Dusty Ray Bottoms prayed for a change. He just didn't know what needed to change. He was 20 years old and home on spring break from Wright State, a small university outside Dayton, Ohio built on land donated by the nearby Air Force base. Bottoms didn't fit in with his classmates in the theater program, and his home life wasn't any easier. The son and grandson of evangelical pastors, he grew up in what he calls a "conservative, God- fearing household."

Bottoms was essentially living three lives: There was the person his parents wanted him to be, the person his peers wanted him to be, and the hollow space where he hoped to one day carve out his own identity. He cried out to God to come and fill the space. "I can't do this anymore," he said. "I need something to happen."

The very next morning Bottoms got his wish. His mother called him down to the kitchen, saying his father had discovered something on his computer. To this day, he still doesn't know what it was his father found, but as he crossed the threshold into the living room, he already knew what they were about to say. Bottoms came out to them, the private longings and fears left unspoken for years suddenly pouring out like shattered glass.

"I was so terrified they were going to disown me and kick me out, but they did quite the opposite," he recalls. "They wanted to do anything they could to fix me. I was so depressed at the time that I would try anything to feel happy or to feel better."

At his parents' request, Bottoms agreed to be exorcised. At the age of 12, he had been sexually assaulted by a man who had pulled him underneath the stall in a mall bathroom. Although he'd lied and said he got away before the man hurt him, his parents remained convinced that he was "possessed by a gay demon." The church he grew up in taught that "if you have a sexual encounter with someone, you take on that person's spirit," he explains.

Bottoms compares his exorcism to a trip to the principal's office. The two-hour session was held in a conference room at a local church, where he was given a series of rules to follow. The facilitator, whom Bottoms calls a "prayer warrior," ordered him to keep both feet planted firmly on the floor and put his hands on the table in the center of the room, palms facing up. Bottoms was instructed to maintain eye contact with the prayer warrior at all times and keep his mouth wide open so the demons could be released. Three people held him in place while his parents looked on — his father scarlet-faced, his mother crying.

"I had to list the names of all the people I ever had a sexual encounter with," he says. "I was nervous, so I made up names. They tried to get me to speak in tongues. I just remember the prayer warrior would tell me to say 'Hallelujah!' over and over and over and over again, really fast, and the tongues would come."

This isn't the first time Bottoms has told this story. He moved to New York City to pursue acting in 2010 and began doing drag after seeing performances by local artists Bob the Drag Queen and Thorgy Thor. Their shows gave him permission to be "different, weird and unique," he says. His stage name is a combination of his childhood nickname, Dusty Ray, and a playful taunt from fellow waiters at a serving job in the city. After performing for nearly a decade in New York bars and nightclubs, last year Bottoms competed on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, on which he opened up publicly for the first time about surviving conversion therapy.

Bottoms came out as a survivor because he hoped it would help others who had endured similar circumstances feel less alone. But now he just wants to prove he was never broken, never needed fixing in the first place. After the exorcism, he was forced to meet with church leaders for a series of exit interviews, and during the third and final session a pastor warned him against continuing down the path of a "homosexual lifestyle."

"You will never find true love," he recalls the man saying. "You will never find success. You will just have a life of misery."

Today Bottoms knows that isn't true. The popularity of *RuPaul's Drag Race* has given him a global fan base. He has starred in national ad campaigns. His one-woman show, *It's a Hard Dot Life*, is set to tour the United States. He's engaged to his partner of six years. "Everything they said I couldn't have," he says, "I have."

the survivor

peter nunn

norcross, georgia

When Peter Nunn was 15 years old, his parents told him he was going on a trip. What he didn't know was that they'd found a men's workout magazine he'd tucked away. At the time, Nunn didn't understand what he was feeling or what it meant to be gay. Homeschooled throughout his childhood, he was raised in a repressive fundamentalist faith that he compares to a cult. "Every aspect of your life was controlled," he says. Transgressing those strict dictates meant risking excommunication, both from the church and the entire community.

During a layover at the airport, his father explained that Nunn was headed to a "therapy center" where counselors were going to "fix" him. If Nunn didn't change, he says, his family planned to "get rid" of him.

"I wasn't prepared for this. I'd been a pretty happy kid, but really quickly — just in that one conversation — I realized everything was on the line for me: my family, my relationship with my parents, my security of having a home, but also my faith and my God were at risk. If I didn't get this fixed, then everything that was important to me in my life could be taken away."

Nunn spent two weeks receiving conversion-therapy treatment at a center in Sioux City, Iowa. He says the building looked like a small office complex that might have been built in the 1970s — a series of sparsely furnished rooms with chairs and desks filling the space as an afterthought. During sessions, counselors told him, he recalls, that "homosexuality is a sin, that God punishes gay people with AIDS, and that there's no way to be in a happy gay relationship." If he continued act ing on his attraction to men, they warned, he would die alone.

Although Nunn wanted to change, these sessions weren't the cure his parents had prayed for. Instead, he was left with depression and shame. At the age of 16, he attempted to take his own life.

Nunn survived that attempt, and he has continued surviving. In his early 20s, at the urging of a friend, he began seeing a psychologist, who helped him cope with the trauma he'd experienced. Even as he began dating men and slowly opening up to friends about his sexuality, the lessons he learned in conversion therapy festered.

"I didn't feel loved by my family, my friends or my God," he says.

Therapy helped him embrace the parts of himself he'd been taught to hate, but it also showed him that talking about his trauma could be transformative — both for himself and his community. In March, he testified in favor of House Bill 580, which seeks to ban conversion therapy in the state of Georgia. If the bill becomes law, therapists in the Peach State will be subject to "discipline by the appropriate licensing authority" if they're caught offering any treatment that seeks to "cure" the sexual orientation or gender identity of anyone under the age of 18.

By talking about his experiences, Nunn hopes to help ensure other LGBTQ youth don't have to suffer the hardships he did.

"If I can give hope to a kid or educate a parent who might not understand how dangerous this practice is and might reconsider sending their kid to conversion therapy," he says, "then it will have been worth it."

the therapist

ralph bruneau

los angeles, california

In many ways, Ralph Bruneau has been there from the beginning. When former California state senator Ted Lieu — now a U.S. representative — sought to introduce legislation banning conversion therapy in 2012, Equality California called Bruneau, a marriage and family therapist based in Los Angeles, to help craft the language. At the time, Bruneau was on the board of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, where he played a part in creating a certification process for LGBTQaffirmative therapists.

As a gay man himself, Bruneau says, he leaped at the chance to help set a precedent for other states to pass legislation banning conversion therapy for LGBTQ youth.

"I don't think there's anybody in our LGBTQ world who doesn't carry around injury and shame, whether they've been through conversion therapy or not," says Bruneau, who specializes in trauma relief for both gay and straight patients. "It's so pernicious and so pervasive that it haunts us through our lives. Conversion therapy is ground zero for that."

Bruneau knows the weight of shame and how difficult it is to unload. He moved to New York City to pursue acting during the time of "free love" in the 1970s, when it felt as though "sex happened almost everywhere." He struggled to reconcile the radical sexual liberation he experienced in the West Village with the nagging idea that maybe, just maybe, he could be straight if he tried hard enough. He attended group sessions at a Scientology center in Manhattan and attempted a practice known as aesthetic realism, which sought to balance an individual's feminine and masculine energies.

Bruneau didn't change, but the world around him did. When the HIV/AIDS epidemic swept through New York in the 1980s, he watched as his theater community was hit hard. Two men with whom he had long-term relationships both died. After he began volunteering at a hospice in the city, he quit acting to pursue his master's (and later his Ph.D.) in clinical psychology.

"Every resource we had was being used to care for our loved ones, and I wanted to redirect my life in that direction," he says. "I've been doing that ever since."

His work as a clinician led him, eight years ago, to advocate against conversion therapy, and eventually Bruneau found an unexpected platform to raise awareness about the practice's harms. In 2017 he competed in International Mr. Leather, an annual contest held in Chicago that's best described as Miss America meets Tom of Finland. Bruneau's speech was about his "journey out of shame."

"I had tried everything, and the thing that worked was to accept that I'm born perfect," he now says.

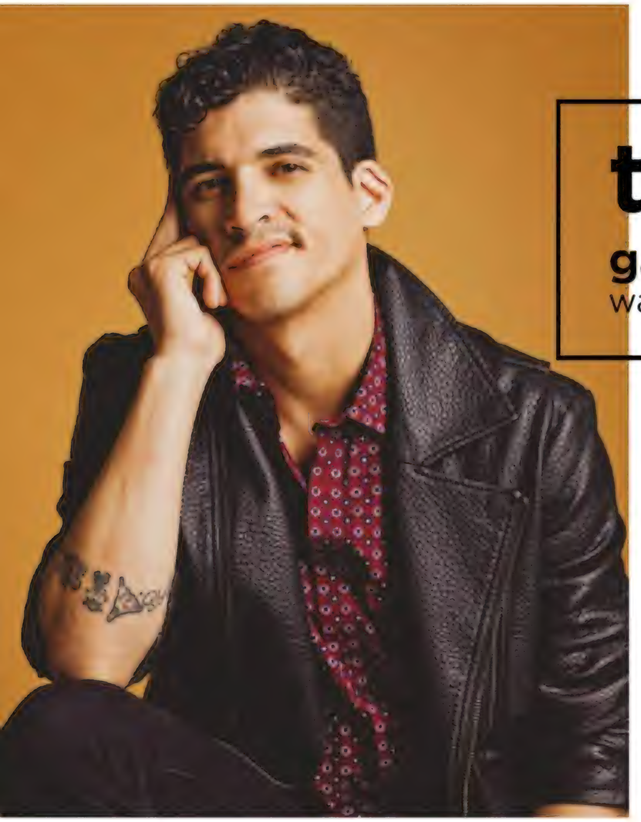
Bruneau won the title, which made him the oldest IML winner in history. A friend often jokes that his victory was historic for another reason: "Nobody else ever won IML with a 'save the children' speech," Bruneau says.

Bruneau spent the greater part of the following year traveling the world to represent IML. During his travels he raised funds for a National Center for Lesbian Rights campaign to ban conversion therapy. His goal was to raise "enough money to hire one staff member for one year." He says he came close. According to

Bruneau, most people he discussed the issue with weren't even aware that orientation-change efforts were still legal in their country. At the national level, as few as three countries have outlawed conversion therapy.

Bruneau believes it's his duty to use his platform, his profession and his expertise to fight for LGBTQ youth. He hopes others will join him.

"Those of us who've dealt with shame our whole lives," he says, "have an obligation to do what we can to make sure other generations of kids don't feel the shame we felt."



the faithful

gaby garcia-vera

washington, d.c.

"Did you hear?" Gaby Garcia-Vera asked his friends and family. "Isn't this so amazing?"

It was March 27, 2019, and Puerto Rico governor Ricardo Rosselló had just signed an executive order protecting minors from the practice of conversion therapy. Although the order doesn't outright ban the practice in the U.S. commonwealth, it does call on Puerto Rico's health officials to take action, within 90 days, against therapy that promotes efforts to change sexual orientation.

From Washington, D.C., Garcia-Vera dialed everyone he knew who still lived on the island — his birthplace and home until the age of 18. A year and a half after Hurricane Maria left Puerto Rico with a death toll in the thousands, and thousands more without clean water or electricity, Garcia-Vera felt irrepressible joy that his community had something to celebrate.

"In the midst of all the horrible things that have happened, it made me proud to be Puerto Rican," he tells PLAYBOY. "It was affirming. It made me feel seen."

Garcia-Vera is among the 70 percent of Puerto Ricans who identify as Catholic. At the age of 11, he shared his sexual orientation for the first time —"I was part of one of the first generations of folks who came out really, really young," he says. Some people in his personal life told him that those like him were "inherently bad." There was something inside them that "needed to get fixed to be right with God."

Garcia-Vera isn't a survivor of conversion therapy, but after joining the Trevor Project's youth advisory council in 2011, he began meeting LGBTQ youth who had been forced to attend camps that promised to pray the gay away. He understood the trauma they experienced.

"I know the warm wash of being and feeling alone," he says. "I know what it feels like for someone to single you out because of who you love. It is one of the most difficult things to overcome."

Many practitioners of conversion therapy invoke scripture to legitimize their work. But Garcia-Vera's Catholicism is precisely what feeds his passion to end the practice nationwide. Feeling shunned by a religious tradition that, he was told, viewed him as the living embodiment of sin, he left the Catholic Church as a teenager. It wasn't until his mid-20s, as he questioned whether condemnation could truly represent God's feelings toward LGBTQ people, that Garcia-Vera began to reconcile his faith with his sexual orientation.

"If we're all made in God's image, then you're perfect the way you are — with all your imperfections," he says. "Loving someone else inherently can't be something that is imperfect."

Today, Garcia-Vera works for a nonpartisan Catholic advocacy group in the nation's capital. In his efforts to ban conversion therapy, he continues to see how morality can be "weaponized" against the LGBTQ community. While talking to a conservative politician in Florida who supported a bill that would allow adoption agencies to discriminate against same-sex couples, for example, Garcia-Vera says the lawmaker asserted that homosexuality is a personal choice.

Catholicism is showing some signs of evolution. In a 2014 Pew Research Center survey, seven out of 10 Catholics in the U.S. agreed that society should accept homosexuality, compared with 66 percent of mainline Protestants and 36 percent of evangelical Protestants. Though Pope Francis has been lauded for his more moderate views on homosexuality, he seemingly endorsed conversion therapy as recently as August 2018, saying that "a lot can be done through psychiatry." The Vatican backtracked on those remarks, but the pontiff outlined a similar sentiment in April, when he advised parents of LGBTQ youth to "please consult and go to a professional" if they are "seeing rare things" in their children.

As Catholic leaders and conservative lawmakers refuse to modernize their views, Garcia-Vera remains optimistic that one day our leaders, both elected and religious, will realize the responsibility they have to those "they represent—to both do better and be better."

"Who and how we love isn't something that is up for question," he says. "We know exactly who we are. We deserve better."

the parent

veronica kennedy

annandale, virginia

Veronica Kennedy remembers exactly where she was when she found out Matthew Shepard had been murdered. Then just 18, Kennedy was living with her parents while she attended Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale. She had come home between classes to eat lunch and furiously type up a paper she'd waited until the last minute to start writing. Her family had a television in the basement, and when she looked up, she saw Shepard's face. He was killed in October 1998 by two men, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, who beat him and left him tied to a fence to die.

Kennedy didn't know him as Matthew Shepard. She knew him as Matt, a theater nerd with a "goose-honk laugh" who frequently showed up to class with a rumpled shirt when he missed laundry day on Mondays. The two had attended the American School in Switzerland, where their classmates included the "children of civil servants and military brats, along with Saudi princes, celebrities' kids and rich businessmen's children." They were dorm mates and had German class together.

Kennedy, who was just entering her freshman year when Shepard was a senior, is still reluctant to discuss his death. She describes the horror of seeing him become a national symbol of anti-gay hate crimes as the "end of innocence."

"I didn't talk about it for a long time, but what I did do was become very vocal as an advocate," she says. "I came out."

Kennedy describes herself as "bisexual, a polyglot and a giant nerd." But she is "a mother first and foremost," which she says gave her a new perspective on the violence and stigma LGBTQ people face just because of who they are. Around the time she gave birth to her son, Elias, and after meeting Sam Brinton and learning about the 50 Bills 50 States campaign, Kennedy began to research conversion therapy. As the mother of a little boy who is "black, Irish and Colombian," the prospect of anyone trying to force him to be someone he isn't horrifies her.

"It's as ludicrous as me saying I'm going to change my kid from straight to gay," Kennedy says. "If Elias comes to me one day and says, 'Mom, I'm straight,' what am I going to do — send him off to try and make him gay? How goofy does that sound?"

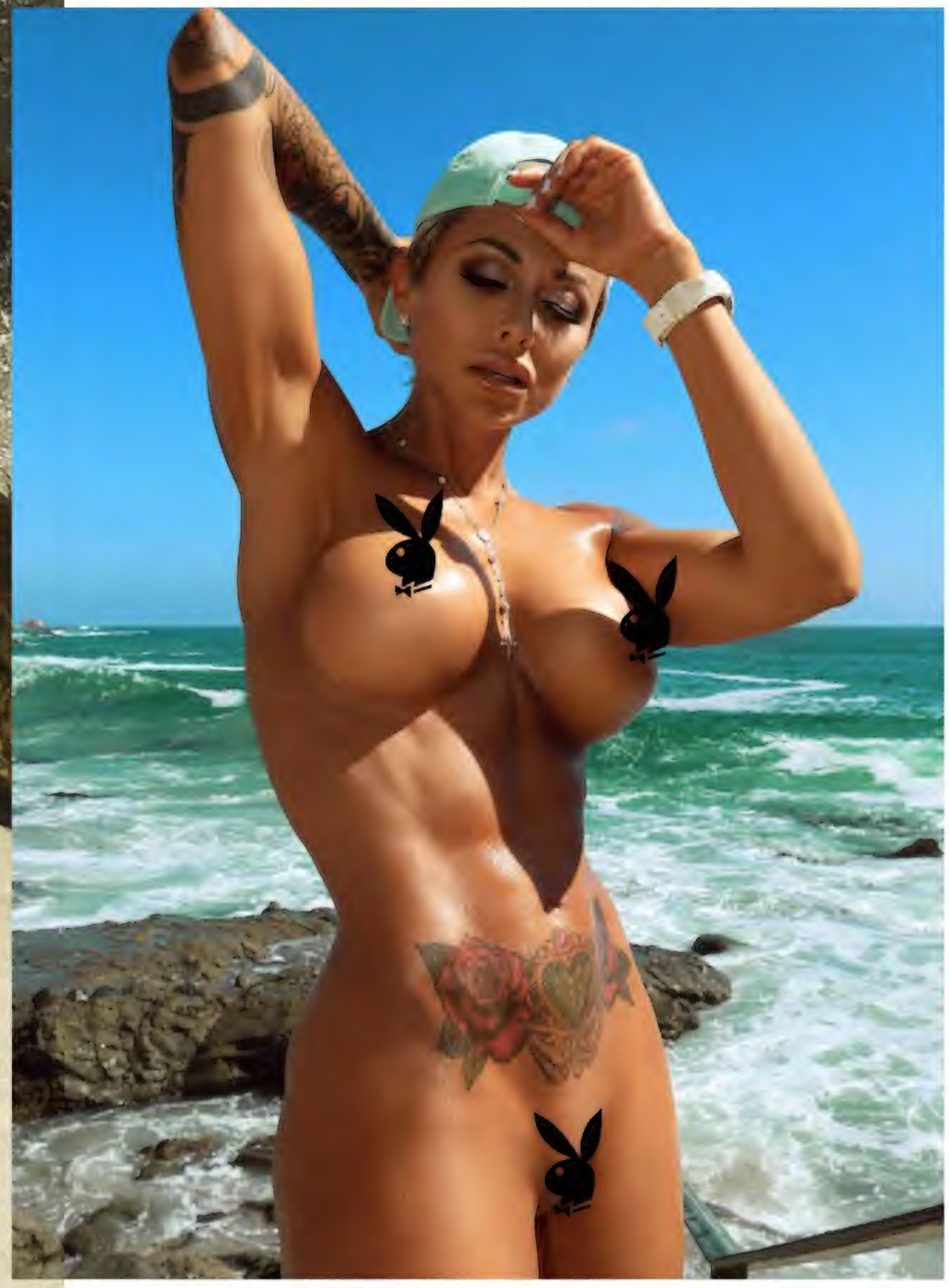
Her experience as both a mother and a teenage friend of Matthew Shepard has given her a unique voice with which to advocate against orientation change. The only cisgender female member of the Washington, D.C. chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, she frequents gay bars in the metro area in gothic nun regalia to advocate for HIV/AIDS awareness. But Kennedy says her role in the drag activist troupe has evolved: She often broaches the subject of conversion therapy with the people she meets, many of whom are survivors.

One interaction sticks out to her. When she was five months pregnant, Kennedy rode with her fellow sisters in the 2015 Pride parade, the punishing humidity of summer in D.C. compounded by the group's signature costumery. As they prepared to board the float, a drag queen approached her and noticed she was expecting. "Love that baby regardless of how he turns out," he told her. "I am who I am right now because I had to stand up for myself and my parents wouldn't."

The two never spoke again after that day, and Kennedy will probably never know exactly what that stranger went through. But having witnessed the brutal cost of homophobia, she told the drag queen exactly what she would one day tell her son. "You are fantastic and you are beautiful," she said. "You are perfection, sweetheart."

MERIDETH

Photography by **RYAN DWYER @LETSHOOT**
HMUA **BRIDGET MARTINEZ @BRIDGETZGLAM**
Produced by **@MAINSTREETPRODUCTIONS**
Model **@MERIDETH.MERIDETH**



MERIDETH IS A MODEL AND FITNESS ENTHUSIAST. SHE ALSO HAS A LOVE FOR ART AND PAINTING, WHICH IS EVIDENT IN HER CAREER AS MASTER COLORIST AND STYLIST.

Tell us something surprising about you?
I sang classical music for 9 years, my first job at 15 was at an Italian restaurant singing opera.

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Of course! Definitely something that was always on my bucket list.

What inspires you?
Instagram/Pinterest- being able to see amazing fashion, destinations, art, lifestyle - keeps me motivated; life has so much to offer.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
I am so proud and comfortable being different, it's the opportunity to shine for being who you are.

Who do you look up to in the modelling industry?
Honestly the people bold enough to stand in the front, Winnie Harlow is unapologetically authentic.

What are some of your hobbies?
I paint and make art whenever I can. Running keeps me grounded, shopping every week because I LOVE to dress.

Name three things on your bucket list?
1. Go on Safari
2. Visit the Maldives
3. Go to Thailand to see and meet Elephants (they're so amazing!)

Turn-ons.
Well in a man.. hygiene is king, well dressed doesn't hurt, but most of all chivalry, nothing makes you want to take your clothes off like a man who isn't trying to take your clothes off. True story.

Turn-offs.
Name dropping, showboating, pretending you are more then you are.

Describe to us your perfect date.
Comedy show and sushi, I need a laugh now and then.

Which world capital would you most like to visit, and why?
Tokyo! I've always been fascinated with Asia, Japan seems so cosmopolitan

What is your mantra?
Submit to your will, command your life.

MAREN MORRIS

The 29-year-old country singer has 10 Grammy nominations (including one win), a recordbreaking album, a world tour—and something to say about how her genre handles women, skin and outspokenness

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **HARPER SMITH**

BY **ANDREA DOMANICK**

Q1: *Your 2016 debut, Hero, won you a Grammy, and this year's follow-up, Girl, was streamed 24 million times in its first week—the most for any studio country album by a woman. What does the spirit of this transition, from Hero to Girl, mean to you?*

MORRIS: I wrote the bulk of Hero around four years ago at a time when virtually no women were being played on country radio. And from the few who were, I felt I wasn't hearing my perspective. I wanted to hear less from a girl singing to a guy about how cute he is and how she wants him to notice her, and more from the perspective of 20-somethings who are out of college but aren't quite ready to settle down. Those fun few years when you're just a mess, you've got a few flings but are starting to come into your womanhood and adulthood. You're not making as many of the same mistakes as you did in your early 20s, but you're still not ready to call it a day. I wanted to be the sassy voice of reason. I was also going through a tough breakup after five years in my first real relationship. At the same time, my career was starting to take off. So Hero was part breakup record, part me finding my independence.

Over the next few years, I started to become more of a boss and a sort of CEO for myself, putting my band and crew on salary, giving them health insurance, becoming the head of this machine.

I also fell in love. I started to open up more to my fans. I wanted people to know I'm still that girl, but I'm growing up and I'm okay with being vulnerable. It's not a weakness. When you find an equal in your life, it's not you giving up anything or any part of you; it's sharing your whole self with another whole self. It took me a second to realize that's a good thing.

Q2: *Girl meditates on everything from craving sex and being in love to moments of yearning and the more emotional nuances of being a woman. How do you approach writing about these topics in a time when feminism and womanhood tend to be associated with a take-noprisoners kind of strength?*

MORRIS: By being honest with myself and knowing I don't have the sassy, armored exterior many of my fans probably think I have. I've learned it's okay to not be a badass all the time. Over the past few years, as I wrote Girl, I learned that it's not a weakness to be vulnerable with somebody else, to share all your light and your darkness with them, to trust that they won't trample your heart or judge you. That was such a learning curve for me, because I used to think if

Locking into becoming an established country artist has been daunting.

you were vulnerable and admitted how much you needed someone, you were being submissive. That's so far from the case. Saying I need my husband [country singer- songwriter Ryan Hurd] isn't me submitting to his power. It's me being independent and saying, "Yeah, I need your fucking time right now."

It's healthy to tell someone that. It's not co-dependent; it's a gift. It takes strength. It takes balls. My acceptance of that felt like, Wow, this is some woman shit. There's strength in the femininity of needing someone but also in having the confidence to ask for it.

Q3: *The album's title track has become an anthem among your fans. Can you explain its meaning?*

MORRIS: It's about a fight I was having with another woman who's also in the music industry. Women in this industry are often pitted against each other. It's not our fault, but we internalize it, because that's what women do. We take on the weight, because we're always so quick to apologize and make peace when we should be like, "Actually, this is their issue, not ours. We need to figure this out. It's not our fault there are so few slots that we turn on each other."

Q4: *Yet you've also said, "Being a woman isn't the most interesting thing about me."*

MORRIS: "What's it like to be a woman in the music industry today?" is the question I'm most sick of being asked. My husband is an artist as well, and no one ever asks him what it's like to be a man in the industry today. What would he say? "Same as it ever was." I never know how to re-answer that question. I don't know how to answer it in the first place, actually, because I don't want to be remembered for being a great female artist. I would like to be known as a great artist.

Q5: *Last year you were featured on Zedd's "The Middle," one of the biggest songs of 2018, which landed three Grammy nominations. What do you wish people knew about you now that you have a higher profile?*

MORRIS: I would love for people to do their research and know that I'm not just an artist. I started as a writer and wrote for other artists, and I co-produced my last two albums. I don't get a ton of questions about my work in that realm. It's always, "So you changed your hair and, like, how crazy is that?" It's like, Motherfucker, I produced my album, thanks.

Q6: *Okay, we'll take the bait. How has your background as a songwriter shaped you as an artist?*

MORRIS: I learned so much in my years behind the scenes. I had to help produce my own demo sessions, and I definitely learned how to listen to and follow trends on the radio as a writer, for research. That has helped me pick singles; I know what hits my ear. Sometimes I'm right, sometimes I'm wrong — but most of the time I've been right. It comes from studying in the "university" of Nashville songwriting and learning from people who were better than me.

Not thinking you can produce is a mentality even incredible writers are forced into. It's not an easy line of work, but when you love every facet of making music, you really do care how a guitar sounds. You care about the reverb on your vocal or how loud the bass is — details like that. I love sinking my teeth into it. That's why it takes me so long to make music, because I overthink it sometimes.

Q7: *Are you a perfectionist?*

MORRIS: I'm a perfectionist until I'm not. I know when I get a gut feeling about something and it's done. Some people will just keep working on music, remixing it and changing things little by little until it's two years later. And then you never put it out. Luckily I have a bone in my body that tells me, "Okay, you can't do anything else to this."

Q8: *Various headlines have described you as being restricted by country. Are media outlets getting the narrative right?*

MORRIS: In a sense, no, because I actually am played on the radio. For the past two years I've been the most-played woman on country radio. It's still way less than a man, but for some reason my music is being played. It's not just about having a catchy song; it's because I don't sound like anyone else. At the beginning, that was hard, but all my singles have been risks. Even doing "The Middle" was a risk, because I was risking that country radio would think I was abandoning them because I was part of this giant pop song.

That I'm restrained in any way is a dumb perception, because I've tried to kick ass at everything I do. I work hard. I wish the same for my sisters, because they work just as hard, if not harder, than I do, and they don't get a single spin on the radio. I don't think I'm pissing on my success by speaking up for them. I'm just trying to say, while I have the success and while I'm here, why aren't any of my friends getting played? I want to shine a light while I have it and not let it be just about me.

Q9: *The past few years have seen greater crossover between country and pop. Is this helping country music? What do you think when people suggest that country music needs saving?*

MORRIS: There will always be traditionalists in every genre who try to hold on to the old. I have respect for that, because there's so much about country music — classic country music—that I love. But every generation has been accused of ruining country music, even the outlaw era of Waylon and Willie. Country is evolving. It's always evolving. You'll always have purists no matter what.

Q10: *So cross-pollination between genres is a good thing?*

MORRIS: Country artists having songs on the pop charts and on pop radio this past year has only helped our genre. Most young people who stream music don't listen to it because of its genre; they listen to it because it's popular, or they discovered it on a playlist and it makes them feel something. When I did "The Middle" with Zedd, most of the world had never heard of me. A lot of people have checked out my country music as a result. It has brought a lot of awareness, fans and listeners to country music, especially recently. It's good for our genre to cross-pollinate, because it makes for better music. It's keeping everyone on their toes and not regurgitating the same kind of art on the conveyor belt.

Q11: *You performed at this year's Grammys with Miley Cyrus and Dolly Parton, and you recently invited pop star JoJo to perform with you onstage in Los Angeles during your world tour. What other artists do you want to sing with?*

MORRIS: I would love to sing with Kehlani. I saw H.E.R. at the Grammys, and she was incredible. I love Khalid. If I'm shooting real high, I would love to sing with Beyoncé. That's the pinnacle.

Q12: *Bigger success has opened you up to more criticism. You've been slut-shamed and body-shamed online quite a bit. Why are you still dealing with this in country-music culture?*

MORRIS: It's a transitional time. Everyone's super anxious. A lot of it is the political climate, the culture of social media. Anytime someone is courageous or doesn't try to blend in, it pisses people off. It's been like this forever, but we're much more connected now than we used to be. A lot of hot-button things that seem small explode into something huge.

Q13: *Have you ever regretted something you've said publicly?*
MORRIS: Not really. Every time I've spoken up or clapped back at some troll, it has been very much me. I wouldn't go back on any of it, because they deserved it. Body shamers? They're asking for it. I would never regret calling them out.

At one point I posted a picture of Emma González, one of the survivors of the Parkland shooting, and I lost probably 5,000 followers. To not be able to share an opinion, or to lose fans and ticket sales over it, is so mind- boggling to me, because it's an American right — a human right — to be able to voice your opinion. Of course, any fan has the choice to quit buying your music or listening to it. But as a tax-paying citizen, I should be allowed to speak up when I'm passionate about something. It's always to increase awareness. It's to let my fans know where I stand. I don't want to be one of those head-in-the-sand artists who's only worried about keeping the money in my pocket. I get only one life here, and if I'm going to be a musician and do this thing I've been given a gift for, I would like people to know what I believe in. This is where I stand, this is what I want, this is the world I want my kids to live in. That's why I speak up when I do. It definitely ruffles feathers. Not many country artists speak up.

Q14: *Not many country artists have agreed to be photographed by PLAYBOY either.*
MORRIS: I remember Dolly Parton's amazing [October 1978] PLAYBOY cover and reading about the drama surrounding this wholesome figure being part of a magazine that has showcased naked women for decades. It was such a faux pas in country music, and yet she ended up making one of the most iconic PLAYBOY covers of all time. Not many other country artists have done that.

I was intrigued, because so many of the moves Dolly made i her career were about bucking the status quo, especially when it came to sexuality and gender norms within country music. As a woman in country music — as a woman in any genre — it always fascinated me. So when I heard this magazine wanted to interview and photograph me, I thought, Okay, I've seen a lot of wonderful spreads you guys have done with artists I love, such as Halsey, so what the hell?

Q15: *Are you concerned about how people might react to your being in this magazine?*
MORRIS: I'm speaking such a loud, noisy concept of what it means to be a woman in the music industry right now. This feels like I'm amplifying a message I've been passionate about since the beginning that has intensified in the past year. I feel I've already challenged a lot of sexual norms. It's funny, because it's not that risqué in the grand scheme of things. Even the cover of Girl is slightly risqué, but it feels like me — throwback but a little modern. I knew it would piss some people off that I was in a bra top. Doing PLAYBOY has been a really fun challenge. I'm trying to do more things that scare me. Every year I'm trying to peel back my layers emotionally — and I guess physically.

Q16: *What else scares you?*
MORRIS: Locking into becoming an established country artist with each passing year has been daunting. It's where I'm comfortable; it's what I grew up in. But I'm sick of the standards we've been forced into, and it scares me that I'm getting so fed up with certain norms.

Q17: *How so?*
MORRIS: I could just shut up and sing, keep my head down, not talk about politics or sexuality in my songs. But I swear quite a bit. I talk openly about drinking. I'm learning things about myself that are starting to freak me out, in a good way. I'm growing

up, and that doesn't necessarily mean becoming more mature or wiser or buttoning things up a bit more. Sometimes it's letting it all be a little more freewheeling.

Q18: *You've been married for just over a year. What has marriage taught you?*
MORRIS: It's taught me that I'm not always right. I've been doing this music thing for so long that it's how I'm conditioned. Letting someone else in and letting him be a part of that with me has been a bigger struggle than I imagined. It's so easy to fall in love, but to stay in love and to fall deeper into love? That's work. It's not giving up your stance but allowing yourself to listen. You both could be right; just because you disagree with somebody doesn't mean they're wrong.

Being married for the past year has also helped me figure out more who I am independently. For example, my husband is very much a feminist, and I've never really done anything that's freaked him out. He has always been accepting. Even with PLAYBOY, he was like, "That's really hot." It's awesome to be with somebody who is an equal and isn't trying to make you feel like a skank because you're proud of your body — someone who's not watering down your ideologies for patriarchal and bullshit standards that women in country music have been locked into for the past several decades.

Q19: *What makes you feel sexy?*
MORRIS: I've been trying to be better at exercising the past year or two. I don't want to be skinny. I want to be strong and feel like Lara Croft. I remember when choosing Girl's cover, I was like, Yeah, I have this body; I'm going to put it on the cover! I felt really sexy because I knew I was going to get flak for it, from these little titties, but I'm definitely owning it. I like when I scare the absolute shit out of myself like that. That's when I feel sexy. That's what gets me off.

Q20: *What should our readers know about sex or sexuality that maybe they haven't thought about?*
MORRIS: Lingerie is supremely overrated and unnecessary. Also, I would say that if you're in a relationship and that person isn't going down on you on the regular, dump them. If it doesn't happen enough early on, you know what you're getting for the rest of it. A selfish lover is a no-go from the get-go. Just dump him, dump her, dump whoever it is. If you can't sometimes give and sometimes take or have a completely equal experience, then that person is probably selfish in many other facets of his or her life as well. ■

IN SEARCH OF THE #20BITEEN MAN

ART BY **OSCAR RODRÍGUEZ AMADO**

SEXUAL EXPRESSION HAS ARGUABLY NEVER BEEN MORE INCLUSIVE, BUT BISEXUAL MEN STILL STRUGGLE SIMPLY TO CONVINCE THE WORLD THEY EXIST. WE ASKED FIVE OF THEM TO TELL US THEIR STORIES

BY **DANA HAMILTON**

"I don't think I could date a bi guy," a friend recently told me. "I'd be constantly paranoid that he'd want to leave."

I had giddily sent her a picture and some quick facts about the man I was going out with that night — bi, a dad, a scientist — which I usually do before a date, both out of excitement and for my safety. But when I got my friend's response, my stomach dropped, even though it was hardly the first time I'd heard something like it.

As a sex columnist, I strive to clear up myths, whether they're rooted in fact (blue balls) or not ("accidental" anal). I've written about baby play, sex dolls and furries, and no one has batted an eye in terms of accepting their validity. Yet male bisexuality remains a blind spot even in my relatively progressive inner circle. I've been asked if I worry about being cheated on or contracting an STI and why I bother dating bi men if they "all end up with other guys anyway." I thought the rise of the hashtag #20BiTeen would help, but scrolling through the posts, I see next to no men. The only place I find any is in my dating-app DMs. So where are they?

The 2016 National Survey of Family Growth shows that 1.8 percent of adult men and 5.6 percent of adult women ages 18 to 44 identify as bisexual. (Bisexuality was first widely recognized as an orientation by the scientific community in the 1950s.) Those numbers have been rising incrementally, and search-engine statistics suggest they'll continue to do so: Since 2016, searches for "bisexual test" have risen by 90 percent, "Am I bi? quiz" by 182 percent and "signs of bisexuality in males" by a whopping 2,147 percent, according to a global study conducted by SEMrush. But the NSFG research also indicates that far more people have had same-sex sexual encounters than ultimately identify as bi. This discrepancy has come up in the data for the past 30 years — despite the fact that in large, population-based studies, bisexual behavior is more common than purely lesbian or gay behavior.

Kerith Conron, research director at the UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute, who specializes in health inequities in the LGBTQ community, has also observed the gap between behavior and identification. "Among men 18 to 44, almost six percent report some sexual attraction to men in addition to women," she explains. "And then when we look at behavior,

about five percent of men in the 18-to-44 age group report having had oral sex with another man in their lifetime." This data stands in stark contrast to the NSFG study's 1.8 percent of men who self-identify as bisexual.

The behavior-identification gap is shrinking at a slower pace for men. That's largely due to stigma: Conron's research has shown that societal attitudes toward female sexuality are more open and fluid, while tolerance for men who have slept with other men is still low. After all, "No homo" and "That's so gay" linger in our lexicon.

"Bisexual men aren't stupid — they know to anticipate a negative reaction," says Brian Dodge, professor at Indiana University Bloomington's School of Public Health. "We've had participants in studies say, 'I'd lose my family, I'd lose my kids, I'd lose everything.' Disclosure is complicated."

A leading researcher on male bisexuality, Dodge conducted a study on biases toward bisexual people. He explored people's perceptions in relation to five common stereotypes: that bi people are confused, prone to sexually transmitted infections, unfaithful, promiscuous and/or going through a phase. From there, he created BIAS (Bisexualities: Indiana Attitudes Scale) to measure those attitudes. Dodge believes the most damaging notions concern erasure — the belief that bisexual people are confused or that their sexuality is temporary. He explains that bisexuality requires constant validation, "whereas when someone says, 'I'm gay,' it's just sort of taken at face value now. None of the stereotypes are fun, but the invalidation of existence — you're confused, you're just experimenting — all those things fall under that umbrella."

Regarding the idea that bisexual people are more likely to be unfaithful in relationships, neither Dodge nor Conron have seen data to support that assumption. And when it comes to STI risk, recent statistical research shows that the numbers of heterosexual men and bisexual men who are HIV- positive are likely nearly identical.

Even within their own populations, bisexual people face daunting challenges when it comes to identity. We've seen new language emerge in recent years to articulate a greater number of sexual categories — fluid, heteroflexible, pansexual — and while that is undoubtedly a good thing, it can create a fracturing effect. People are claiming myriad sexual minorities because there are more words to describe their orientations and desires, but with each categorization comes a need to belong within that category. Bisexuals are getting siloed within their own community.

And then there's the problematic connotation of "bi": The term *bisexual* has come under scrutiny for excluding nonbinary and transgender people. But shrugging off a word that has helped define you, especially from the margins, is easier said than done. And in recent studies Dodge has noted that people with identities outside the binary are the most accepting of bisexuality, followed by gay and lesbian people — and, lastly, heterosexual men.

The combination of tensions within the LGBTQ community and poor attitudes from the heterosexual mainstream leads to double discrimination. It's not hard to imagine the effect that prolonged societal stigma and lack of solidarity would have on mental health: Bisexual individuals consistently report higher rates of mental health disorders, substance abuse and suicidal ideation, even when compared with other groups within the LGBTQ community.

Despite it all, men are thinking about bisexuality. They're googling it. They may even be engaging in it — though not many of them are coming out. But they do exist, and they have a lot to say. I sat down with five men to talk about what it's like being bi and proud in #20BiTeen.

"FOR A LONG TIME MY LINE WAS 'I'M THE ONLY BISEXUAL MAN I KNOW, BUT I'VE FUCKED A LOT OF STRAIGHT GUYS.' "

ON TERMINOLOGY

DOMINIC MINOR
Age: 29
Location: Minneapolis
Occupation: sales
Status: single
I identify as bi in addition to identifying as queer. Even though I'm relatively young, I'm still old-school, so I kind of existed before there was really language outside the binary.

TRAVON FREE
Age: 34
Location: Los Angeles
Occupation: TV/movie writer; comedian
Status: single
Bisexual is not an exclusion of anything else; I will literally date anyone. The term implies two but also everything else under that umbrella of identity.

GRAHAM ROEBUCK
Age: 30
Location: Toronto
Occupation: sales (eyewear industry)
Status: dating a gender-nonconforming person
I think there's value in bisexual as a reclaimed term, because at a certain point it was used disparagingly. To take that term and own it, I think there's power in that.

ON COMING OF AGE

FREE: Where I grew up, in Compton, you don't want to be anything but straight. I knew as a child I was different, but I didn't have a word for it; I didn't have any way of even knowing what it was. The world is built to tell you that boys like girls and girls like boys, so because that felt natural too, it didn't feel like I was pretending. But then you get to high school — I remember seeing a guy and being like, I kind of see him the same way I see her. And because I didn't know anything about *bisexuality*, it was like, Am I gay? And then once I started having sex with my high school girlfriend, I was like, Well, it's definitely not that, but what is this other thing? There was no way to explore anything sexual with a boy where I was growing up, so it became a thing that just sat in my mind. I remember googling around and stumbling on bisexuality. I read the description and was like, Oh, maybe this is me. This feels like home.

JASON ELLIS
Age: 47
Location: Los Angeles
Occupation: SiriusXM radio host
Status: married to a woman
I had a crush on [Metallica frontman] James Hetfield, but I didn't want to have sex with him at all. It would be a complete ruiner if he were to take his pants off. But I definitely wanted to have sex with Olivia Newton-John and Joan Jett.

JACK MOORE
Age: 31
Location: Los Angeles
Occupation: writer and producer
Status: dating a woman
You go through those weird junior-high times where you're at a sleepover and they put on porn and there's a low-key circle jerk happening. I found myself more drawn to the other dudes jerking off than to whatever porn was on TV. So for a while you walk around with that rattling around in your head: *Am I gay? Am I gay? Am I gay? I must be gay*. Then at some point you think, No, I still really love watching straight porn. I would ask my gay friends, "You know that gay thing where you still love eating pussy?" and they would be like, "No, I do not know that thing." So instead of identifying as bi, you think, Well, maybe I'm going through a healthy experimentation phase. Then you're like, I'm straight but experienced. And then you realize, No, I still really wanna give blow jobs, and those things aren't mutually exclusive.

At some point, coming out as bisexual is less of a decision than it is throwing up your arms and being okay with all of the above. Sometimes the right answer is that there is no answer, or that it's all an answer. It's not this one moment where you're like, "Oh, I'm bisexual!" It's this long journey to a shoulder shrug.

ON COMING OUT

ROEBUCK: I live a double life a little bit. Heterosexuality is the assumed default, so it's easy to just let people assume that and accept the privileges that come along with it, but at the same time I wish it was easier to not have to do that. There have been a lot of times when I haven't been out at my workplace because I have a fear of not being believed or of people thinking I'm doing it for attention. I can sort of tell by people's attitudes that they might not react in a positive way, so I'm not going to bring it up. I'm trying to work on that.

ELLIS: Coming out was a very long process. I had someone tell me, "It's okay you're bi, but you better not tell anybody, because it'll end your business." I see where he was coming from: It was about people not being cool about it because I'm so hetero- looking. I'm into boxing, I have guns, I have children — all the things you're not "supposed" to have. They just don't understand the other side. They're not trying to be mean. They'll say, "Whoa, you're fuckin' *what?*" But even that's hurtful.

MOORE: There were a few months when I went off the ladies altogether and was like, This is what it's like to be gay. But even then I never came out, because it still didn't feel right. The whole coming-out-as-bi process is this long, drawn-out thing of trying on hats and being like, No, this one doesn't quite fit right and neither does this one, until you're just like, Wow, I think I just like all the hats.

ON DATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

FREE: With women, it's having to reassure them that all the misconceptions they have about bi men just aren't true. It always feels like an interview, like an interrogation. It's not like I'm with you and I'm going to say, "You're great, but I'd really love a guy." Like I'm craving a burger or something — that's how they think it works! "I know I've been a vegetarian for a long time, but, man, I could go for a steak. It's been so long and there are so many steakhouses!" If I'm in love with you, and I'm dating you, that's what we're doing.

MOORE: I was literally called a faggot by a liberal woman I was on a date with in 2011 after she had just confessed to me that she was bisexual. I have to say I don't fault her, because I think she had a lot of internalized homophobia, but she essentially said, "It's different for boys, and you know that."

ELLIS: With guys, my dynamic is "You're my friend and we have sex." I can love you like I have love for my guy friends I don't have sex with, and if I sleep with a gay guy, we're just friends, not lovers.

MINOR: The idea that I'll leave a woman for a man is h ilarious. It's just you trying to escape the fact that I'll leave you for you, which is the only reason I'm gonna leave.

ON ERASURE

ROEBUCK: I think a lot of times people assume that if you're in a straight-presenting relationship you're somehow not bisexual anymore — or in the opposite sense, that you've picked a side. But that's not how it works. My sexual identity doesn't change depending on who I'm dating; it remains the same.

MOORE: The number of gay men who say to me, "Oh, honey, I was bi for a little bit; you'll come around," infuriates me. And then I have bisexual friends who are more femme, and nobody believes them. People look at me and are like, "Yeah, he wants to talk to me about LeBron James — that's something a woman-fucker would say." Whereas with one of my friends who's much femmier, people are like, "Oh no, he's definitely gay." Don't presume to know what somebody wants.

MINOR: I've doubted it, and I've had it doubted by other people. Doubting my sexuality is the same to me as doubting my blackness. When you're in a marginalized group based on external factors, you don't get the choice. Especially in black culture: If you suck dick, you're gay. Period. You will be responded to, reacted to and treated as gay. You can question all these things, but does it change how you're responded to? I can feel white all day, but I'm still gonna be black.

ON COMMUNITY

MOORE: It's hard to be bisexual. Straight people don't really want you and gay people don't really want you, so it's easier to be closeted about it. Sometimes it's easier to identify as gay when you're with a man and as straight when you're with a woman,

“I GET TO WALK OUTSIDE EVERY DAY AND KNOW THAT MY LOVE ISN’T LIMITED TO MALE OR FEMALE, AND THAT IT ALLOWS ME TO SEE SO MUCH BEAUTY IN SO MANY PEOPLE.”

because who would want to be lost between gay people and straight people who are telling you that you don’t exist?

FREE: I personally don’t feel I have a community within the community. I see so many things done in the name of LGBTQ events and fund-raisers and all types of things, but no one acknowledges the fact that everything gays and lesbians feel in terms of stressors, mental health and things like suicide are experienced multiple times over by bi people, because they don’t have a community within the straight community and they don’t have a community within their own community — with the people who should be accepting and protecting them.

ELLIS: I don’t feel connected to the community at all. I want to be more a part of it, because I don’t see people who look like me out there talking. There is a community in there. Most of the time it’s organized adults having a really good time, and I feel like people don’t even know about it. I’m so happy I’ve gotten to experience that, because if I had stayed closed off maybe I never would have understood how much enjoyment I could have in my life.

ON VISIBILITY

MOORE: This is changing, but for a long time my line for this was “I’m the only bisexual man I know, but I’ve fucked a lot of straight guys.” It’s getting better, but that’s still the situation for the most part.

MINOR: I believe that as a culture, men are conditioned to hide [their bisexual desires], and they’re stubborn enough to do it for their entire lives. I believe that hundreds of thousands of men who have the potential to be in love and live their best life and have plenty of same-sex experiences will just go without it because of conditioning and whatnot. So in practice, I don’t see a lot of bi men.

FREE: I’ve always felt that if I have to die for my identity, I’m okay with that. If you’re going to be visible, on some level you have to make peace with that. To me, the silence is worse, because if we remain silent, it allows their voices to grow. I think we’ve made the progress we’ve made because we’ve refused to be silent.

I’m not even saying don’t be afraid. Feel the fear and walk through it, because every time you’ve come out the other side unscathed or breathing, you’ve gotten that much stronger. When people say things like “Be fearless and be brave,” it’s like, no — you can be fearful, but do it anyway.

ON FREEDOM

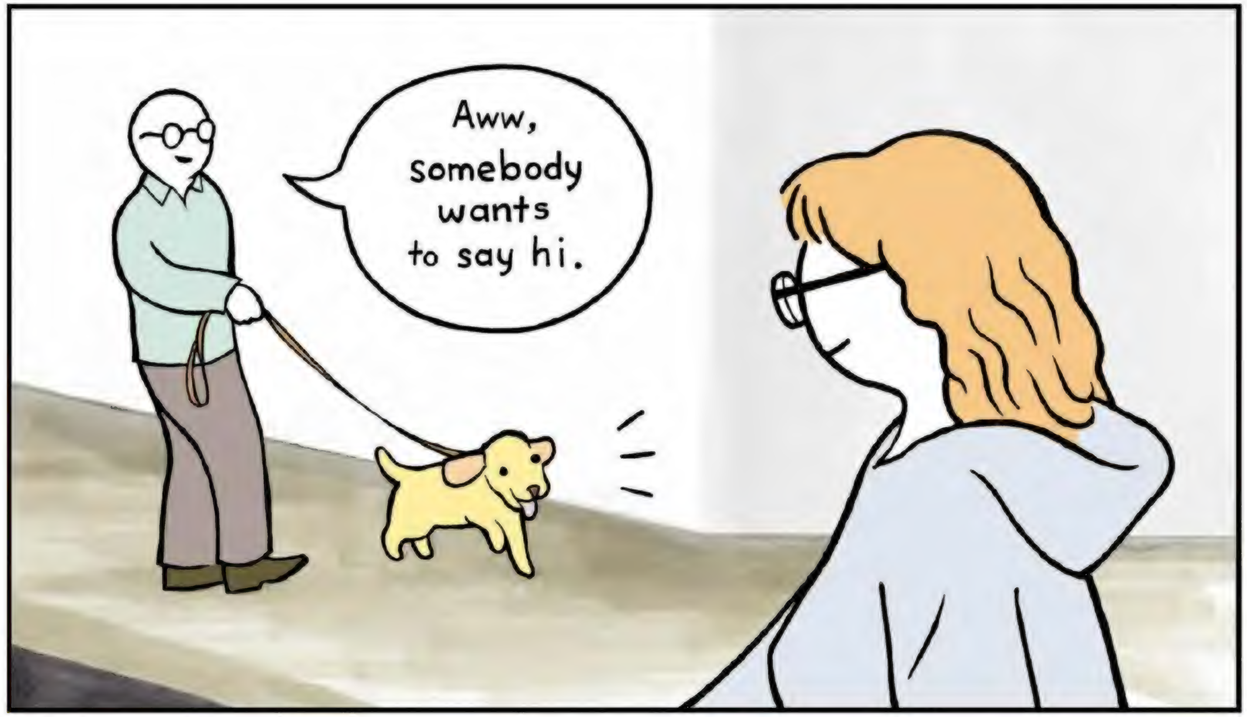
FREE: I love that I get to experience the best of men and women. I love that I get to walk outside every day and know that my love isn’t limited to male or female, and that it allows me to see so much beauty in so many people who identify as so many things across the spectrum. I feel the world is so much more beautiful to me because I’m not stuck in one camp.

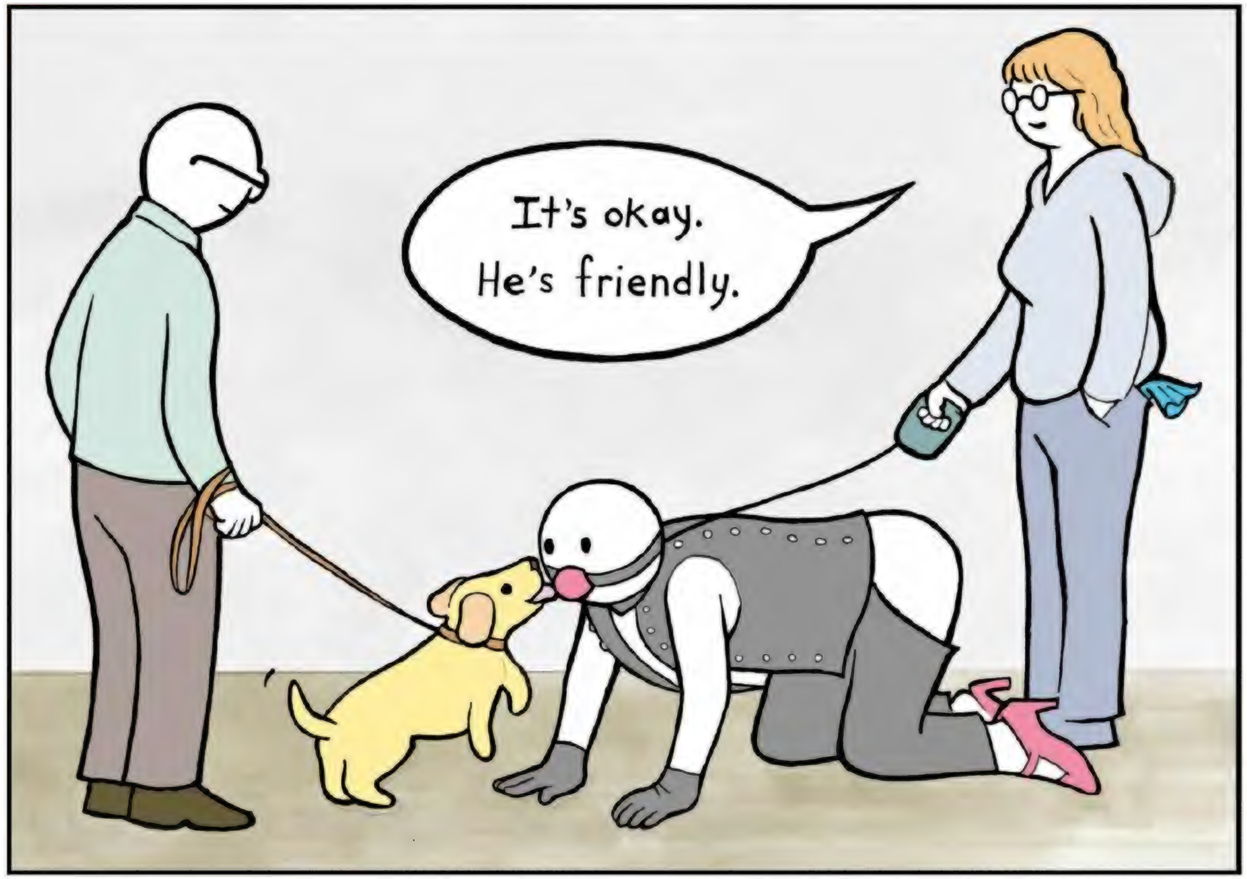
ROEBUCK: I think having accepted my own bisexuality has led me down a path of being more accepting of other gender expressions and all sorts of things, and I think it’s been really healthy. I started painting my nails recently. I’m not brave enough to wear it to work, but I do it on my days off. It has let me think of new ways to express myself, I guess. I don’t have to be pigeonholed into one path of what masculinity can be.

MINOR: I’m an equal-opportunity ho! I don’t have to play a character. I’m showing up in my sweatshirt and bucket hat, and I just might be kissing a guy, I might be kissing a girl, I might be kissing a neither, and that’s just what’s up. Same bucket hat, different partner, and people appreciate that because it contributes to the visual of what bi means. You don’t have to always present it, which hopefully gets across the message that you can’t assume. I kind of like that I pass as straight and I’ll walk in and be like, “Yeah, suckin’ dick was crazy.”

MOORE: People always use that Maya Angelou quote “When someone tells you who they are, believe them” to talk about evil people, but I want to flip that on its head and make it about bisexuality. When someone tells you who they are, believe them. Don’t act like you know better, because you definitely don’t.

ELLIS: I f I had to [pretend to be s traight], I would break. Something would break. I’ve done that. I can’t not be me. I like hanging out with my kids, I like the sun, I like skateboarding, I like having sex with guys. A lot. That’s my thing — you can’t take that away from me. It’s who I am. ■





KANDY KOUTURE

Photography by **JESTON BRANDON (@PERFECTLYFLAWLESSPHOTO)**
MUA **AMOS J ARTISTRY** *Location* **INK COUTURE TATTOOS (SAN ANTONIO, TX)**
Model **@PLAYMATEKANDY**

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Tell us something surprising about you?
People may be surprised to learn that I own two tattoo shops in my hometown of San Antonio, Texas. Like me, Ink Couture exudes glamour and luxurious style...but also has an edge.

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Oh my goodness...yes! I was thrilled to shoot for Playboy. I grew up idolizing the beautiful iconic Playboy Playmates: it is truly a dream come true to be one of them.

What inspires you?
Quite simply, I'm inspired by beauty: in all forms...from the human form to the beauty of a sunset and everything in between.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
I always say that I didn't chose modelling, modelling chose me. My mother was a professional model and beauty queen, so modelling is literally in my blood and found myself in front of a camera and on the front page of the newspaper at just 18 months old.

Who do you look up to in the modelling industry?
I admire and look up to the Playboy icons such as Pamela Anderson, Carmen Electra and Anna Nicole Smith.

What are some of your hobbies?
I absolutely love Pilates: it's literally my therapy for body and mind. I love the exertion involved that requires you to be fully in the moment.

Name three things on your bucket list?
Visiting the pink beaches of Harbour Island in the Bahamas, owning a 1976 Corvette, and placing a lock on the famous Pont des Arts Bridge in Paris.

Turn-ons
Confidence, bad boys, sparkly things, and sky-high heels.

Turn-offs
People who don't love animals.

Describe to us your perfect date
I am a bit of a hopeless romantic, so my perfect date would consist of a candlelight dinner, roses, followed by a stroll underneath the stars.

Which world capital would you most like to visit, and why?
I would love to visit Athens, Greece. The combination of history and beauty of this world capital places it on the top of my travel list.

What is your mantra?
One shoe can change your life...just ask Cinderella. Life is short, so buy the shoes, fall in love and live each day.

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PLAYBOY

HERITAGE

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA • KINUKO Y. CRAFT • THOMAS PAGE MCBEE • A PRO-CHOICE PL ATFORM • THE NAKED TRUTH: NUDE DUDES IN PLAYBOY

APOCALYPSE *THEN*

AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE MEMORABLE PLAYMATE SCENE FROM FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA'S OSCAR-WINNING 1979 CLASSIC

BY **STEVE PALOPOLI**

On the great and sprawling road map of American culture, the distance between PLAYBOY magazine and Francis Ford Coppola's masterpiece *Apocalypse Now* is, surprisingly, just a short jaunt — perhaps one best traversed by helicopter.

Among the movie's many indelible scenes is a five-minute sequence, possibly inspired by actual events, in which Playmates put on a show for servicemen — or try to. Against the *chugga-chugga* t hump o f w hirring blades, a Rabbit Head- emblazoned chopper descends from the night sky onto a brightly lit stage as hundreds of G.I.s scream in anticipation. An unfazed Captain Willard (Martin Sheen), leading his soldiers upriver to hunt the renegade Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando) when they unexpectedly encounter the USO show emceed by Bill Graham, joins the audience. As three Playmates—portrayed by Colleen Camp and real-life Centerfolds Cyndi Wood (1974 Playmate of the Year) and Linda Carpenter (August 1976, as Linda Beatty) — emerge from the helicopter and begin shimmying to "Suzie Q," the crowd grows frenzied. Soon enough, the soldiers rush the platform, forcing the performers to depart. Like the movie as a whole, the scene brilliantly captures a frightening aspect of humanity: the menace of men driven to extremes.

"IT WAS ALL, I'M SURE, VERY DANGEROUS, BUT THROUGHOUT THE SHOOTING WE DIDN'T LOSE ONE PERSON. SO MANY THINGS CAN GO WRONG."

Previous page: *In the film, February 1973 Playmate and PMOY 1974 Cyndi Wood takes on a role close to her heart—Playmate of the Year. She recalls that during her downtime on the set, and even in the midst of a typhoon, she liked to write original songs.* ***Above:*** *A scene featuring Colleen Camp that built on her real-life experience as a bird trainer was filmed but later cut from the original release; part of it can be seen in Apocalypse Now Redux.* ***Right:*** *Camp (top left), Linda Carpenter (top right) and Wood atop a helicopter bearing the Rabbit Head insignia.*

In 1974, when Coppola started to consider directing Apocalypse Now, pretty much everyone around him thought it was a bad idea. As proven by Coppola's previous critical and box office successes —*The Godfather, The Godfather Part II* and *The Conversation* — gangsters, gritty realism and paranoia were the currency of New Hollywood. War movies were hopelessly uncool, especially ones about Vietnam, from which the U.S. had just withdrawn. But Coppola decided to take on the project and headed into the jungles of the Philippines — then under martial law and in the middle of a bloody civil conflict — where he turned a 1969 script by John Milius into a hallucinogenic antiwar epic. Despite legendary delays, when the film debuted in 1979 it won the Cannes Film Festival's highest honor and was nominated for eight Oscars, winning for cinematography and sound.

The movie has more than endured; it has evolved. In 2001 an expanded re-edit, *Apocalypse Now Redux*, restored 49 minutes to the film, including an additional Playmate story line involving helicopter fuel (as well as a brief connecting scene in which Willard's crew members talk about a U.S. soldier so obsessed with his PLAYBOY's that he kills a South Vietnamese officer who damages one). Kim Aubry, a producer on *Redux*, found inspiration in the original Playmate segment. "The USO scene was one of the realest moments I'd ever seen in cinema. There was something about it that felt almost like a documentary and yet surreal at the same time," he says. "It's so incredibly powerful and political."

Indeed, it's that kind of reaction that has contributed to the film's remarkable staying power. This year Coppola will release what he considers the definitive director's version, *Apocalypse Now: Final Cut*, which will of course include the iconic USO scene. To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the original release, we present the never-before-told oral history of how the Playmate scenes came to be, as related by those who were involved.

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Unexpected disasters delayed but never derailed the ambitious production.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA, director: I remember looking at the USO set with the head of the art department and saying, "I made a big mistake. As they approach from the river, they ought to see a glimpse of this place." We had built the set really far off the river, and you had to drive for a while. From a dramatic standpoint it would have been better if, when they're in the boat, they look and say, "What the hell is that?" He said, "Well, we put it in the wrong place." I said, "Yeah, but we'll make it work." And that's when we were hit by the typhoon that destroyed everything.

CYNDI WOOD, actress and 1974 PMOY: Every time they'd plan to do our scene, something would happen. On one trip, the day I arrived, Marty Sheen had a heart attack, so they shut down production for six weeks. Another time, I arrived just in time for what was probably the largest typhoon of the decade. All of a sudden, without warning, everybody's running, shouting "Take cover! Take cover!" and this typhoon comes raging through. We were trapped in an abandoned building in the jungle, far away from the set and the rest of the crew, with no way to communicate, no telephones. It was so loud. Here I am, 25 and pretty innocent, and all these grown men around me were scared to death that everybody was going to die.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: We had to stop shooting for three or four weeks. It was a major event; it destroyed the USO set, and we had to rebuild it. So I said, "Well, this time let's rebuild it right on the river so that we can correct the mistake we made." And they did.

ROLE PLAYING

Some parts were filled by eager actors (with one photographer determined to document the production); others took time and effort to cast.

CYNDI WOOD: I didn't go looking for the part. I believe they called me in; I didn't have to audition. I was involved, believe it or not, for four years on that film — though I wasn't there all the time.

COLLEEN CAMP, actress: I had done a movie called Smile, which was filmed in the Bay Area and Santa Rosa. Fred Roos, coproducer of *Apocalypse Now*, came to visit that location in 1975, and I met him there. Fast-forward to when he was casting *Apocalypse Now*. I met with Fred, Francis and producer Gray Frederickson, and at first I did not want to do any nudity. But Cyndi Wood, who was Playmate of the Year, was a very close friend of mine.

NANCY MORAN, on-set photographer: I was a freelance photographer in Vietnam in the early 1970s. Gloria Emerson was a wonderful reporter for *The New York Times*, and I took pictures for many of her Vietnam stories. We worked together a lot. She was very critical of my going [to the *Apocalypse Now* set in the Philippines]; she thought it was too soon to make a movie like that, because it would take away from the war in a way. That kind of feeling was going around. I mean, it was very soon after the war ended.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: One of the Playmates we had cast before the place was wrecked by the storm was Lynda Carter — who, when we were able to start again three weeks later, couldn't come back because she had just been cast as Wonder Woman. So we cast Colleen Camp. We had Cyndi Wood, Colleen Camp and Linda Carpenter — all beautiful, very nice young women — and they worked with the choreographer to work out a little routine.

COLLEEN CAMP: One night I went to the Palm Restaurant on Santa Monica Boulevard with Fred Roos and Cyndi Wood. At that dinner, Fred and Cyndi convinced me I should replace Lynda Carter and rethink the nudity — which I did. So I got cast.

NANCY MORAN: Every day I called the publicity department at United Artists [the U.S. distributor for *Apocalypse Now*] and asked, "Do you want to hire me to go out there?" Finally they did. They wanted someone who'd actually been in Vietnam. I stayed in the Philippines for almost two months in 1976.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: We had to find many, many young men who could look like G.I.s, and we were of course in a place where there were few. We did a lot of work to locate army installations and educational institutions. That was a big and difficult effort. [For the role of the MC] I was fortunate to have a friend, Bill Graham — rest in peace — who was a famous rock promoter but always wanted to be an actor ever since he was a kid and first saw John Garfield in a movie. He was a remarkably wonderful person, Bill Graham.

COLLEEN CAMP: When I went to the Philippines in November 1976, it changed my life. I was 23 years old. It's martial law; there's 400 men and three women. The sequence that we filmed was unbelievable.

THE ALL-NIGHTER

The Playmate USO scene was shot in one single marathon night of filmmaking that included a variety of challenges.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: We knew that it was meant to be an incredible contradiction — which was not untrue — where the Americans had sort of brought their whole culture into this ancient, primeval jungle. So that was the fun of it, as it were. And of course

the challenge was that this unlikely show-business show should be deposited right there in the midst of antiquity. Obviously it was night, so the photographer had to figure out how the hell he would see it. He came up with this concept of these almost rafts with banks of lights on them, which were there to illuminate the scene.

COLLEEN CAMP: Our call time was about two in the afternoon, and we shot till about six in the morning. It was amazing. Here we are, in the middle of the Philippines. We had to be really careful because of the helicopter blades, and the pilots were 18, 19 years old — they were very young. I remember we had to get out of the helicopter onto that little tiny strip and just start dancing.

CYNDI WOOD: That little routine was nothing, but we shot for 16 hours straight and had to do it over and over again. They had to get different angles, and they shot the audience, and they did this and that. I collapsed on the stage from exhaustion. I've never been that tired in my life. They brought in a doctor, and he gave me a couple of B12 injections. That was kind of intense.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: Supplying the people, and their safety, food and bathroom facilities, was in itself a major operation. Once we had it all together, we just shot through the night. The reason it took so many hours to shoot was it involved difficult stunts — when the helicopter flies up and there are still guys hanging on to it and they drop into the water.

It was all, I'm sure, very dangerous, but throughout the shooting, we did not lose one person in the entire year and a half, two years. As a director working on a play or a movie, that's the greatest fear you have, because the people working so hard and so many hours have their minds on what they're doing and not on their own safety. You're constantly emphasizing safety, and so many things can go wrong.

NANCY MORAN: It was a long night, and I remember thinking it was amazing that they could do all this at once. It was so much work, but it was a very funny scene — here's this boat going downriver, and all of a sudden they come across these Playmates. It's just a wonderful, surreal idea.

Colleen had a wonderful sense of humor on the set. Cyndi's the only one who could dance, but that adds to the goofy charm of the whole thing, I think. The guys were supposed to go nuts, which is absolutely believable, and start leaping onto the stage. But it's like — and this is one of the things about the movie—how much control do you have over hundreds of extras? If I had been Colleen or Cyndi or Linda, I think it would have been scary to have all these guys come jumping out.

COLLEEN CAMP: When the G.I.s started to rush the stage, it was actually scary. It was very quick — the girls get scared, they have to get back into the helicopter, and they're hurried off the stage. But it was actually planned out really well, so we weren't in any danger — except that, you know, helicopters are extremely dangerous.

CYNDI WOOD: When they rushed the stage, I don't remember being aware that that was going to happen. Francis did that a lot — you wouldn't know what was going to take place, so you would react naturally. He was an incredible director.

THE REAL VIETNAM PLAYMATE

Playboy lore has it that the USO scene was inspired by Playmate Jo Collins's much more practical 1966 trip to Vietnam.

GARY COLE, former PLAYBOY photography director, who oversaw the magazine's 1979 *Apocalypse Finally* pictorial: Back in those days, before a Playmate could appear in a film, Playboy had to approve the filmmaker or approve the script or something, because they didn't want the girls appearing in porno or really crap movies if it could be helped. Obviously, because Coppola was involved, I think we skipped that step.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: Everyone hassled us, from the Department of Defense on. Playboy could have easily said, "We do not want you to depict the Playboy logo on that helicopter." They could have done anything they wanted; it was their imagery. But they basically left us alone, and I was always very appreciative.

ELIZABETH NORRIS, former PLAYBOY senior director of public relations: In the 1960s, a lifetime subscription was deliverable by a Playmate. During the Vietnam war, a group of guys in the 173rd Airborne Brigade pooled their money, and one of them, Jack Price, ordered a lifetime subscription. They wanted a Playmate to deliver it, which was part of the deal. Long story short, 1965 Playmate of the Year Jo Collins went to the hospital in Vietnam where these men were and met them.

JO COLLINS, December 1964 Playmate and 1965 PMOY: I didn't even know where Vietnam was — I thought I was going to Europe. I had no clue. Never in a million years did I think it was going to turn out the way it did.

GARY COLE: People would say, "Oh, Playboy sent Playmates over there." Well, Jo Collins is the Playmate we sent to Vietnam who actually visited with the troops. No girls ever went over there and jumped out of a helicopter and did a go-go dance or anything like that.

JO COLLINS: When I was in Vietnam in 1966, we were in areas that were literally being bombed. We could have been blown up at any time. Scary, exciting — it was all those things. I visited as many bases and medical field centers as they allowed. I wish I could have worn attractive outfits, like the miniskirts and go-go boots [the Playmates wear in the movie].

ELIZABETH NORRIS: We have always thought Jo's Vietnam trip was the basis for that scene. However, that has never been substantiated.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: The original script, and that scene, were the work of John Milius — he's the one who was really the genius behind *Apocalypse Now*, in my opinion. I know he was well aware that there were Playboy Playmates in Vietnam. I did not know of it. I didn't base it on that; I based it on what was in the original script, which might have been inspired by that.

Far left: *Director Francis Ford Coppola speaks with Camp behind the scenes, with Wood in the background.* ***Left:*** *Wood says that as the helicopter stunt was being filmed, she wasn't sure whether the G.I.s hanging from the landing skid were stuntmen or not: "Some of those things you just didnt know, because they were so spontaneous."* ***Top right:*** *As the challenging production went on, Coppola saw the movie's budget balloon from $12 million to nearly three times that.* ***Bottom right:*** *Carpenter and Coppola on set.*

Linda Carpenter, the real-life August 1976 Playmate, plays a fictional Miss August in Apocalypse Now. To fill the crowd with hundreds of G.I. look-alikes, the crew sought out extras at military and educational institutions in the Philippines.

LOST AND FOUND LEGACIES

Across the film's several iterations, the core Playmate scene has remained intact.

COLLEEN CAMP: In the John Milius script there was a scene that set up the girls losing the helicopter fuel with Bill Graham, and then they trade for fuel to get out. Those scenes were crucial to the subsequent scene. But the day I arrived in March 1977, Martin Sheen had a heart attack, so the scenes we were shooting never had a setup. Francis Coppola, in improvisational mode, said, "Tell me a little bit about yourself," and I said, "Well, I used to be a bird trainer at Busch Gardens." He decided to write a whole scene of me and birds in the helicopter, and a piece of it was shown in *Apocalypse Now Redux*.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: During the first typhoon, I didn't want to stop shooting, because I have always felt that if you get bad weather, that's an opportunity to have something really extraordinary. You might as well shoot. So we all went during the typhoon, and the crew tried to put the set back together. The rain was coming down unbelievably. That's when we shot the scene where they go to the medevac camp, which was in the typhoon. And that was put back in the *Redux* version.

KIM AUBRY, *Redux* co-producer: Obviously those [fuel-related] scenes were intended to be in the film. The 1979 released version has some strange gaps where, for length and other reasons, scenes were removed, and there are certain continuity things that you don't quite get unless you see these added scenes.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: Since I had these three women, and they were all uniquely talented and had their own stories, I shot three additional sequences in this scene — which would now be extremely bad in the #MeToo movement — where Bill Graham sort of trades the girl for fuel. This is not something that would go over very well in today's political climate. The point I was trying to make was that in a way the abuse of sending a 17-year-old boy to Vietnam to drop napalm on people is as immoral as what is done to these young, beautiful girls at 17. That was a symbol of abuse — what we do to the young men, we also do to the young girls in our so-called civilization.

COLLEEN CAMP: When the movie came out, initially I was upset. All my scenes were cut because we weren't able to shoot a scene to set them up. At the end of the day, it was a lesson. You can't control things. It was a very important thing to learn, and I was lucky to learn it at that age.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: Tribeca is going to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the movie, and they said to me, "Which version do you want to show, the original 1979 version or the much longer *Redux* version?" The 1979 version was very abruptly cut to be short, because at the time the movie came out, no one knew what its fate was going to be. A lot of people said it was too long and too weird. I didn't really like the original version, but I also felt the *Redux* version was too long. So I said, "What I'd really like to do now is what I think is the best version — what I would say is Francis's version, the one I prefer." And that ultimately got done, and I am very pleased with it. What's available in 2019 for color and sound is so beyond what it was when we first made the movie that it looks and sounds unbelievable. *Apocalypse Now: Final Cut* has the Playmate show, of course, but it does not have the medevac scene.

CYNDI WOOD: Working on the f ilm was truly an incredible experience, scary as it was. We were in a solid concrete building with no glass in the windows when the biggest typhoon hit. It was so loud, it was deafening, like at any moment the whole building would cave in. This is going to sound weird, but I've never felt more alive in my whole life. ■

HERITAGE SPOTLIGHT

A KALEIDOSCOPIC TALENT

An appreciation of artist Kinuko Craft, whose ingenuity graced PLAYBOY*'s pages across five decades*

BY **CAT AUER**

One day in 1974, Kinuko Yamabe Craft handdelivered to Playboy's Chicago office a set of paintings she'd been commissioned to create for the magazine. Designed to accompany a "ribald classic," Craft's elaborate wood-panel triptych (right) and two additional works were so skillfully done, from the intricate medieval Russian iconography to the faux-distressed gold-leaf frames, that they looked as if they'd been lifted from the walls of a museum.

Stunned, associate art director Kerig Pope dropped to his knees and kissed her feet.

"I was astounded by how well she did it," says Pope. "It had a very authentic look, and I was terribly impressed. It's kind of embarrassing for me; she probably thought, What kind of weirdo is this?"

Craft was unfazed by Pope's enthusiasm. Still a working artist today at the age of 79, she says that her many PLAYBOY projects gave her the opportunity to learn about other artists and their techniques. "worked like a school for me," she says. "It was the most effective training I ever got."

Having begun in 1967 with an assignment from founding art director Arthur Paul, Craft continued to work for PLAYBOY through 2000. Across those five decades, her phenomenal gift for working in whatever medium and style the task at hand required — including art deco, biblical, trompe l'oeil, even nursery-rhyme illustration — is on display in more than 100 magazine pieces.

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From the moment she picked up her big sister's crayons and drew a mountain landscape on a sliding screen in her family home in Kanazawa, Japan at the age of two, Craft knew she was an artist. "That was the first huge painting I did," she says. "Nobody scolded me — I'm so grateful!"

Another early moment had an indelible effect on the nascent artist. "My grandmother was carrying me on her back. Outside was the forest, in beautiful sunlight. A stray bamboo leaf, stuck to the end of a cobweb, twirling with the breeze. The sunlight hit the wooden sash, and I thought it was the most beautiful thing," she says. "It is etched in my mind. That was the first full awareness of being surrounded by beauty."

Ever since, Craft has gravitated toward beauty and endeavored to capture it in her work. "Unfortunately, I'm a mere mortal," she says, "and so I can't grab it."

After obtaining a fine art degree in Japan, Craft moved to the States in late 1964 for graduate study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Arriving in the thick of a miserable winter, she almost turned on her heel and fled. "No leaves on the trees, and it was desolate, so lonely looking," she recalls. "And the cold! It was colder than any cold I knew."

But she stuck it out and began her studies in 1965, frequently visiting the eponymous museum next door to wonder at the master works within. After a year and a half, Craft left school and started working within Chicago's studio system, which she describes as "a bunch of illustrators sitting and waiting for salesmen to bring jobs." It wasn't long before her portfolio found its way to Art Paul and she accepted her first PLAYBOY assignment: an illustration for a wry short story about urban bohemians. From there the PLAYBOY commissions kept coming in, engaging her virtuoso artistry for everything from fiction, humor, essays and tech stories to a sex survey.

"With her sophisticated citation of many strands from Western art's tradition of visual fantasy, Craft clearly has high expectations for her audience's wider cultural knowledge," writes professor Lorraine Janzen Kooistra about Craft's PLAYBOY paintings for another ribald classic: Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*. Hieronymus Bosch, Botticelli and Arthur Rackham are among the visual references Kooistra notes in the playfully wicked paintings.

Craft's versatility also caught the eye of novelist and cultural critic Ray Bradbury. "Kinuko Craft is an artist for all seasons, for all kinds of subjects, and in all kinds of styles," he writes in his 1985 volume *The Art of Playboy.* "She fits herself to her subject with charming ease and yet leaves herself free to remain herself. Her illustrations suggest one who is a true connoisseur of art, widely ranging through all the countries of the world."

Bradbury goes on: "One cannot help but think how delightful it would be to walk into a gallery full of the fruits of her kaleidoscopic talents." (We're happy to report that one can, simply by flipping through the PLAYBOY archive.) Years later, Craft would illustrate *The Witch Door*, one of Bradbury's original PLAYBOY short stories.

Other notable authors whose stories were paired with Craft's creations include Paul Theroux, John Collier and T.C. Boyle. Alice K. Turner, PLAYBOY's fiction editor from 1980 to 2001, described her as "one of our very best artists."

Writer Gore Vidal was so taken with one of Craft's paintings for his 1978 story *Kalki* that she and the magazine decided to give it to him. But in trying to compliment her work, Vidal unintentionally slighted her. "When he received it, he said, 'I usually don't like illustration, but I like this one.' It's offensive," Craft says, laughing. "I wanted to say, 'What's wrong with illustration?' "

Outside of PLAYBOY, Craft worked for advertising agencies, textbook publishers and other magazines including *Time, Newsweek, National Geographic, The Atlantic* and *Forbes*. Rarely given much time to complete her projects and reluctant to turn down work, Craft frequently pulled all-nighters to meet deadlines, drinking a single cup of cold green tea to stay awake.

"YOU CAN FEEL THE PAINTER'S PASSION IMPRISONED IN THE CANVAS."

"Everything that was flying my way, I caught it. It was one of those aggressive periods. I have to do it, I want to do it," she says. "That was the passion I had — even for math-book illustrations."

In the first decades of her career, illustration was a maledominated field, as Pope recalls. Craft faced additional barriers, especially at smaller agencies and publications. "When they looked at me, all they saw was Asian. 'Bring me the Asian samples from your portfolio next time,' " Craft says potential clients would tell her. "Not being born in this country, and speaking with an accent, was not advantageous."

But Craft recalls PLAYBOY as being fair and welcoming. "They looked at me as a painter, just a painter," she says. "PLAYBOY was gender blind, color blind."

Craft's work has been shown in galleries across the country, and she was inducted into the Society of Illustrators hall of fame in 2008. Her paintings have graced the covers and pages of dozens of books, and her work is in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian.

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In the early 1980s Craft left Chicago for the East Coast to settle into more rural environs. "I love trees more than humans, I think," she says. High on a hill in the forests of Connecticut, a black bear visits her big backyard and plays with the birdseed cakes, sometimes bringing its cubs. It's a setting Craft vastly prefers to city life, though living in a rural area has had its complications; she recalls sending canvases on their own to New York via bus.

Though the advent of faxing and later FedEx made it much easier to deliver sketches and final art to clients, not all technological advances have resonated with Craft. Digital art in particular holds no allure. "At a museum, you can feel the painter's passion imprisoned in the canvas," she says. "When it's printed, everything — structure, composition, idea — is there, but not the passion. Digital gives me the same feeling. It's beautiful, but somehow not enough."

The artwork Craft produced for PLAYBOY spanned multiple genres, but today she paints mostly in a style of fantastical realism. Her newer work frequently features strong women characters such as Eleanor of Aquitaine, the 12th century queen.

"I'm becoming a militant for women's rights," Craft says. "Y chromosome is not that great!"

These days she sells her original canvases through the Borsini-Burr Gallery in California. She's hard at work on an oil painting of a "winter general" who marched from the depths of her imagination — a powerful white-haired woman wearing armor and wielding a sword. For such works the initial drawing can take up to a week, followed by session after session of painting with her brushes, which she likens to feeding: "If the painting takes longer, I have to feed her again. It's very hard. I'm 79 years old and work like I'm 49!"

Taxing though it may be, Craft has no plans to stop painting, finding purpose in endlessly chasing a connection to beauty and to nature. "There's something I want to grasp, which always eludes me. I think I'm going to feel that till the end of my life," Craft says. "My poor bones can't rest. I have to do what I'm wired to do." ■

Detail of Craft's illustration for a June 1987 PLAYBOY *fiction piece titled The Egret.* ***Opposite:*** *The triptych Craft created to accompany The Gabriliad, Alexander Pushkin's naughty New Testament spoof that* PLAYBOY *ran as a "ribald classic" in 1974. It was her first time working with gold leaf; she visited the medieval room at Chicago's Art Institute for inspiration.* ***Left:*** *Craft in her studio, circa 1983.*

SAMANTHA JAYNE

Photography by **LUIS GOMEZ @UNIVERSE137STUDIOS.COM**
Model **@SAMANTHAJAYNE.X**

I'm Samantha Jayne, I'm 30 and from the UK. I've wanted to pose for playboy since I was a young girl so I hope you enjoy what you see ;)

Tell us something surprising about you?
I'm into women as much as I am men!

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Extremely excited, I've wanted to do this for so long!

What inspires you?
Body confident women, everyone has a different look and everyone has beauty in their own way.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
I always looked up to models especially busty models!

Who do you look up to in the modelling industry?
Jodie Marsh and Cami Li

What are some of your hobbies?
Lingerie shopping, gym, wining and dining, pole dancing as I am an ex dancer.

Name three things on your bucket list?
Travel around Thailand, go to a red carpet event, own a place abroad.

Turn-ons
Someone who knows what they want and knows how to get it, someone who makes me laugh and people who dress well.

Turn-offs
Bad hygiene, feminists, loud and eccentric behavior.

Describe to us your perfect date.
Something a bit different, I spend a lot of time going for dinner and drinks so would like to go to a theme park or visit a landmark.

Which world capital would you most like to visit, and why?
New York

What is your mantra?
Never judge a book by its cover.

ILLUSTRATION BY **JOEY GUIDONE**

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

FIGHTING TO BE SEEN CAN MEAN CONTENDING WITH BEING MISHEARD. FORTY YEARS AFTER AN UNPRECEDENTED *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW*, **THOMAS PAGE MCBEE** EXAMINES DESTRUCTIVE TRANS NARRATIVES AND FLAWED FRAMEWORKS

In 1979, famed composer Wendy Carlos came out as trans in the pages of this magazine. This was no small thing. By the time she sat down with journalist Arthur Bell for the Playboy Interview, Carlos had won three Grammy Awards for her 1968 synthesized take on Bach and scored Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange.* PLAYBOY's nearly 14,000-word piece—billed as "a candid con versation with the *Switched-On Bach* composer who, for the first time, reveals her sex-change operation and her secret life as a woman"— elicited sympathetic letters from readers and was arguably groundbreaking.

It was, after all, one of the few pieces of original journalism about trans people in the mainstream media in the late 1970s. Yet a rereading reveals troubling ways in which gatekeepers, ostensibly charged with faithfully presenting our emergent stories, failed. It is also a reminder that the human cost of that failure, all these decades later, is part of every trans person's story, including my own.

• • •

If Americans had heard of a trans person at all at the time of the Carlos interview, it was probably Renée Richards, who in 1976 and 1977 had fought to continue playing tennis after her transition, generating a major controversy in women's sports. For refusing to abandon her desire to play professionally, Richards was called an "extraordinary spectacle" in *Sports Illustrated*, shortly before a 1977 New York Supreme Court ruling confirmed her right to compete "as female."

Erasure — ignoring or dismissing trans people and their contributions—is why most people today, when they think of the pivotal 1969 Stonewall riots, don't remember the many trans women of color who were on the front lines. Erasure was the primary weapon used against trans people 40 years ago, and when it didn't work, dehumanization became the norm. Despite existing across cultures and millennia, trans people, the new cultural narrative went, threatened the "natural" order of things. Two years after the Richards ruling, Carlos, who'd made the occasional public appearance as "Walter" despite having completed her medical transition in 1972, was understandably wary about making her trans status public in a landscape that was hostile and othering that is, dehumanizing through marginalization — in its treatment of trans women. (Trans men then, as now, didn't much figure into the cultural imagination.)

The misguided idea that physical differences are manifestations of something sinister was, it seemed, back in vogue. Such superstitions, dominant in the medieval era, had largely been put to bed once Freud came along and demonstrated that it was the mind, not the body, that held the key to a person's behavior. But journalists, film directors and authors, newly eager to tell trans stories and unconcerned with the well- being of their subjects, found an enduring language in monstrosity. Bell, in fact, sums up Carlos's story with an allusion to the classic monster tale The *Phantom of the Opera*. "[She] became a phantom figure, living in [her] own version of the opera house," the introduction to the interview announces — right after comparing her personal life to "a drama that could easily have been written into *Clockwork*'s surrealistic scenario." Bell casts Carlos as not-human, a monster occupying a nightmarish world of her own making, rather than laying the blame for that nightmare squarely at the feet of the culture that had shamed Carlos into hiding in the first place. His framework demonstrates this violent "othering" in action.

But there's a lot to learn from Carlos's graceful and humane responses to the often anthropological and ill-informed questions. (At one point, Bell asks her to describe her bottom surgery in gnarly medical detail. She does so reluctantly and "utterly without emotion" — a reasonable response to the likely humiliating task of describing the most intimate part of her body not only to a stranger but to a huge, unknown audience of readers.) All these years later, it's painful to read her insistence on herself in the empathy vortex of the interview. In a direct dig that Bell seems not to notice, she says, "Being a transsexual makes me a barometer of other people's own comfort with themselves. Those who aren't sexually at peace with themselves tend to be the most uptight around me." At one point, he asks if she had "any idea" what would have happened if she'd not transitioned. "Yes," she responds, with a frustration I'd wager almost any trans person can relate to, "I'd be dead."

• • •

It's a funny thing to trace one's own winding story with this cultural rubble, this debris from the wrecking ball of history, in mind. Despite the recent ground gained in representation, mainstream American culture has generally reacted to trans

bodies in a way that has been disastrous for those of us who live in them: We face some of the highest murder and suicide rates of any population in America.

As a trans author and journalist, I've spent the past decade or so holding my nose and digging into our history in an attempt to understand where I learned there was something wrong with being who I am. That shame, which took me years to overcome, delayed my transition into adulthood and nearly killed me. And without fail, I've located it in the framing of our stories — the othering that is the hallmark of the many movies, articles and books that defined the trans experience with little to no input from actual trans people. It may be hard to remember in the era of Pose and Orange Is the New Black, but until recently, when we showed up in the American imagination we were either tragic victims (*Boys Don't Cry*), villainous shape-shifters (*The Crying Game*) or straight-up villains (*The Silence of the Lambs*).

As for Carlos, I wasn't able to speak with her for this story. A representative directed me to her website, which gives "PLAYBOY magazine editors" a negative rating on her short list of "people and publications who have betrayed a cruel indifference to anyone's interests but their own."

I know what it's like to risk this cruelty for the small but sacred reward of continuing to live another day. And I see a truth about the dark heart of humanity, even if I refuse to make anyone a monster: Despite the courageous visibility of Carlos, Richards and many other trans women and men who made the decision to live with heroic openness at the end of the 20th century, the people tasked with telling their stories often failed at their jobs. In some cases, they're still failing.

The good news is that the rise in digital and social media has vastly expanded opportunities for trans people to tell our own stories and to change the conversation—away from limiting and dehumanizing scripts about genitals and surgeries and toward bigger and broader questions: What is gender anyway? How does it define how we see the world and how the world sees us? What is a "real" man or woman, and who taught us to think of ourselves that way? How does race complicate gender identity? What about class?

These are questions for every body — and I believe that our shared humanity makes gender a rich framework in which to explore culture, trans or not. The shame of journalism past is rooted, almost always, in the inability of reporters to see their own biases. Given that, journalists who speak to trans subjects may want to look in the mirror first for some personal reflection. For my part, it took 30 years before I saw myself in my reflection.

Can you imagine? ■

Composer and electronic-music pioneer Wendy Carlos in her New York City studio, October 1979. In addition to recording the Grammy-winning album Switched-On Bach, the first all-synthesizer classical music release, Carlos composed the scores for movies including A Clockwork Orange, The Shining and Tron. Her May 1979 Playboy Interview is available to read on our digital archive, iPlayboy.com.

A GALA FOR THE AGES
WELCOME TO OUR 65TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY
The luminaries attending this imaginary scene all touched, each in their own indelible way, Playboy and its evolution—from penning the first Playboy Interview to being the magazine's most famous cover model to helming the company for 20 years. Can you name these cultural heavyweights and American icons? To this coterie of early influencers, we raise a special toast of thanks. Here's to them—and to another 65 years.
ILLUSTRATION BY SPIROS HALARIS

WE WON'T GO BACK

FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY, PLAYBOY HAS CHAMPIONED REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY — IN THESE PAGES, IN THE COURTS AND ON THE STREETS

BY **ELIZABETH YUKO**

"It's okay if you think it's not right for women to have abortions — but it's not your problem, because we decide." So said Chelsea Handler in a piece PLAYBOY ran during the whiteknuckle summer of 2016. Entitled *My Choice*, Handler's story includes characteristically blunt reflections on her personal experience with abortion and makes a case for the durability of *Roe v. Wade.* "Once you go forward in history," she wrote, "you don't go backward."

But backward may be exactly the direction reproductive rights in the United States are now headed. With the emergence of at least 14 state-level abortion cases that could, if they find their way to the newly right-leaning Supreme Court, result in the toppling of *Roe v. Wade*, it's time for the pro-choice movement to regroup. Toward that end, we offer this brief history of reproductive rights through the lens of PLAYBOY.

• • •

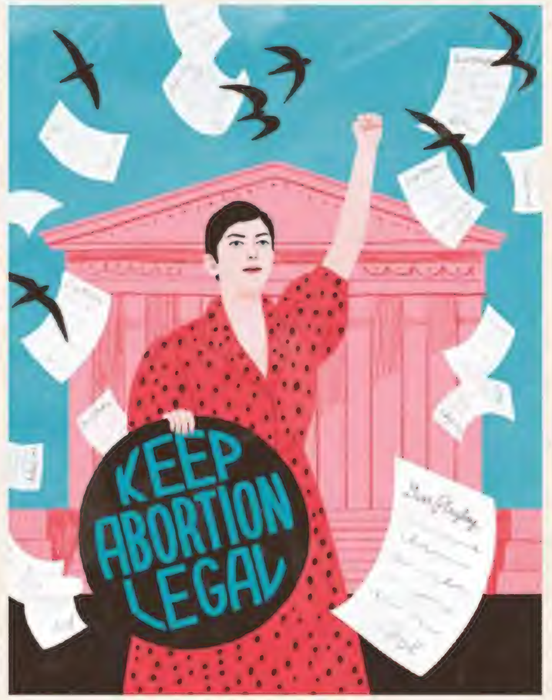
America in the 1960s was, by and large, not a safe place for a woman to terminate a pregnancy. In most states, abortion was illegal (with exceptions for cases such as fetal anomaly, extreme natal complication and some instances of rape and incest). Those seeking the procedure had to resort to whatever care they could get, which ranged from sympathetic doctors operating illegally to unqualified individuals performing abortions without training, sterile conditions or necessary resources. In 1965, 17 percent of all deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth occurred due to illegal abortions, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. Abortion was a public health crisis, and PLAYBOY responded accordingly.

Some of the subject's earliest appearances in the magazine were in Hugh Hefner's *Playboy Philosophy*, peppered throughout his voluminous musings on sex and society. In a January 1964 installment Hefner wrote, "Abortion remains illegal in all states of the Union, although it is undergone by hundreds of thousands of women annually, under circumstances that seriously endanger not only their health and welfare, but their very lives." To combat any misconceptions about who was seeking the procedure, he added that more than half of all illegal abortions were performed on married women. Like it or not, he argued, abortion was a mainstay in married, middle-class American families.

PLAYBOYcemented its position in the December 1965 issue, in a response to an anti-choice letter: "A pregnant woman is faced with choices — and we think she should be allowed to decide which alternative is preferable under the circumstances — whatever the circumstances happen to be." We upped the ante in the May 1967 issue when, speaking in the *Playboy Forum* — a deep-diving letters section in which readers and editors debated issues raised in the *Philosophy* — our editors urged readers to write to their senators and representatives, demanding they support bills to "liberalize antiquated abortion statutes" in 12 states. Clearly Hef and his colleagues viewed the issue as one of universal urgency.

Perhaps the most meaningful contributions to the conversation came from women, despite the magazine's overwhelmingly male readership at the time. According to a 2017 article by Sierra Tishgart in The Cut, of the more than 350 letters on abortion published in the magazine between 1963 and 1973, approximately one third were written by women. In a world where decisions about women's bodies were made overwhelmingly by men, women used our letters section as a global platform from which to speak their truths.

In addition to our editorial coverage, the Playboy Foundation — the charitable- giving organization that supported groups embodying the Playboy Philosophy — began funding the abortion - rights movement in 1966 by providing a grant to the Association for the Study of Abortion, which offered information and strategy advice for other advocacy groups. This continued with financial support of organizations including the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws and the Women's National Abortion Coalition, as well as those working on a local level in middle-American battlegrounds such as North Dakota, Michigan and Ohio. Playboy also provided funding to the American Civil Liberties Union Women's Rights Project, whose co-founder Ruth Bader Ginsburg co-authored a 1973 letter to the magazine that cited "the Playboy Foundation's generous support" while emphasizing the daunting challenges that remained.



As the idealistic 1960s gave way to the shell-shocked 1970s, the pro-choice movement dug in: Instead of pushing for liberalized abortion laws, it began advocating for their all-out repeal. This was initially addressed here in a 1967 *Forum* letter from Dr. Lonny Myers of Illinois Citizens for the Medical Control of Abortion. Myers argued that even in the wake of partial reform, "there will be no significant improvement in all the tragedies associated with clandestine abortions." But perhaps the most wellknown example of PLAYBOY's advocacy for repealing abortion laws came in the form of *The Abortion Revolution*, a September 1970 article by Dr. Robert Hall that served as an examination of the history of the procedure and a playbook for how a total repeal could be achieved. His predictions of how the repeal would carry the day in the Supreme Court largely came true.

Which brings us to the case that changed it all.

• • •

In July 1970, a 22-year-old Floridian named Shirley Wheeler became the first woman in American history to be convicted of manslaughter for having an abortion. The Playboy Foundation provided grants to the Center for Constitutional Rights to help with Wheeler's defense, as well as to law professor Cyril Means, who filed a brief on her behalf on constitutional issues involved in the case. Ultimately, the Florida Supreme Court overturned her conviction. And an important bond was formed: The foundation later provided Means with the funds to file an amicus curiae brief in support of the Texas court case that eventually led to *Roe v. Wade*.

The right to privacy was the basis for this landmark case. The plaintiff, then known only as Jane Roe, was a single woman from Texas who wanted to end her pregnancy in one of the many states that permitted abortion only when the woman's life was in danger. In a 7-2 decision, handed down in January 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that the constitutional right to privacy "is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy." Most of the existing state laws on abortion were rendered unconstitutional.

With that victory, PLAYBOY's abortion coverage ebbed over the next three decades —with the notable exception of indepth coverage of antiabortion terrorism in the 1990s. But a creeping post-Obama conservatism, plus increasing challenges to abortion on state and federal levels, meant a new wave of engagement. Handler's 2016 piece broke the news that the author had chosen to have not one but two abortions at the age of 16 — a revelation that went viral and demonstrated the issue's continuing volatility. Two years later, on the other side of Donald Trump's ascension to the White House, then outgoing president of Planned Parenthood Cecile Richards sat for the *Playboy Interview*. The tenor of that May/June 2018 installment echoed that of our coverage from the 1960s and early 1970s. Richards stressed the need for everyone, men included, to stay vigilant in the fight for reproductive rights — a battle cry that became even more urgent with the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court in the fall of last year.

"If we believe in progress and in taking away barriers," Richards said, "there's always going to be a next fight." ■

ILLUSTRATION BY **MONICA GARWOOD**

KRISTY-LYNN

Photography by **LUIS GOMEZ @UNIVERSE137STUDIOS**
MUA **JAMIE KIMBROUGH**
Model **@KRISTY_SEGUIN**

Tell us something surprising about you?
Something surprising about me is that I hate needles! Many people are shocked to hear that I can't even stand getting blood taken, yet I am covered in tattoos. LOL.

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
I was beyond excited to shoot for Playboy. I started modelling when I was 15 years old and it has always been a goal for me. I love the class and beauty that Playboy puts out there.

What inspires you?
Art inspires me. I am a lover of Art and creativity. I am also very inspired by the beauty of nature.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
I started to pursue my career in modelling when I was 15 years old. I have always loved the fashion and beauty industry and was excited to see what I could put out there that was creative for me. I have never really been concerned with becoming "famous". I do this because I enjoy it. It's like acting. It also gives me a chance to connect with my feelings and makes me feel better about myself.

Who do you look up to in the modelling industry?
Everyone really. I am forever in awe of all the beauty and creative images I see from people of all shapes and sizes.

What are some of your hobbies?
Some of my hobbies include art and drawing, anything crafty, photography, exploring and travelling the world.

Name three things on your bucket list?
Three things on my bucket list would be seeing Lake Louise in Alberta, Canada when its frozen. It is apparently one of the most beautiful sights you will ever see. I would also like to swim with whale sharks and meet Billie Eilish in person to tell her how amazing she is. Oh and hug her sexy ass, she fine! LOL.

Turn-ons
Turn ons are clean cut men who are driven and hard working, tattoos, properly trimmed beards, nice butts (bootaaay) lol, and good ol fashioned romance

Turn-offs
Turn offs would include: body odour and body hair for sure! Stinky feet, lazy people, ppl who think they are better than others and ppl who act like jerks to impress others.

Describe to us your perfect date.
My perfect date would be some kind of set up on a rooftop with an amazing view, or a picnic on the beach watching sunset... nothing extravagant... I am more impressed by realism and keeping things simple than material things.

Which world capital would you most like to visit, and why?
I would love to go to Athens, Greece. Anywhere in Greece actually! I am dying to see the ancient landmarks and am in love with every picture I have ever seen of Santorini! I can only imagine what it looks like in person.

What is your mantra?
My fave mantra would have to be "Actions speak louder than words". Anyone can say I love you, but words are only just that, if you don't show it.

MEMBERS ONLY

A LOOK AT THE VERY SMALL (BUT SOMETIMES FAIRLY LARGE) CLUB OF MEN WHO HAVE APPEARED NUDE OR NEAR NUDE IN *PLAYBOY*'S PAGES

BY **LANE MOORE**

PLAYBOY is world famous for its nudes. So closely associated is the publication with sexy depictions of women that I was shocked to discover the magazine has, across its more than 65 years, run plenty of photos of naked or near-naked men.

Nude dudes, in PLAYBOY? Now that's worth a little exploration.

So I decided to investigate. Whipping out my proverbial magnifying glass, I would become a privates detective, a gumshoe of guys, a dick of… dick. What would the pages reveal?

• • •

As I sifted through the nearly 750 issues that constitute the PLAYBOY archive, a couple of things became abundantly clear. First, the images of unclothed women far outnumber those of nude or semi-nude men, which isn't terribly shocking. But it is worth noting, because my impression had been that PLAYBOY was designed to show women without any men at all — no distractions that might get in the way of the ultimate fantasy. And second, though scantily clad men do show up in PLAYBOY's pages, the true full monty is rare, and a full-on hard on appears to be a unicorn — that is, it doesn't exist. (I would love to be wrong about this.)

I was excited by my first sighting of a nearly naked guy — not because it's an especially sexy photo (it's not) but because it occurs in the December 1953 PLAYBOY — the very first issue. On the back inside cover, a blackand-white photo shows a young man wearing nothing but a turban, a codpiece and a saucy smile. The image promotes an article in the next issue about a swinging "art ball," and that January 1954 piece features front and back photos of another nearly nude man, this one dressed as a satyr—horns, cleverly placed ivy leaves and a perky tail secured by God knows what. Fun party!

On the hunt for naked men in PLAYBOY, things seemed off to a cheeky and playful start. But alas, the fun, sassy "oops, my towel might fall" photos quickly dry up, with nary a pec to be seen for what feels like years.

Thankfully, once the 1960s and 1970s hit, we get back to intermittent pictorials spotlighting guys who, in keeping with the free-spirited times, take off those confining clothes, man. These photo features often revolve around well-known actors in on-set photography from upcoming movies. Notable members of this elite gentlemen's club include Peter Sellers (carrying a guitar to protect his modesty in the nudistcamp whodunit *A Shot in the Dark*), Elliott Gould (manhood obscured in a sudsy bathtub for his film *Move*) and David Carradine (steaming up the rails with Barbara Hershey in *Boxcar Bertha*).

Though I'm sure these sets were professional and chaste, some of the 1970s pictorials remind me of screen-grabbed porn. Looking at you, Kris Kristofferson and Sarah Miles, whose "oh my" July 1976 photo spread (promoting the movie *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea*) showcases no fewer than five different sex moves.

Frankly, it's nice to see a man like Kristofferson doing his part for readers' entertainment, even if we don't get to see his junk. The more I thought about it, the more sense this sort of male nudity seemed to make in PLAYBOY. The magazine began as a kind of instruction manual for straight American men, so what better way to illustrate the epitome of that lifestyle than by putting naked men with naked women in sexy situations? It's like an easy-to-follow visual aid to living the dream — five sex moves you too can master! — but without any visible wangs to distract men from their affirmed heterosexuality.

And then, in the August 1973 issue, I hit the jackpot: what I believe to be the magazine's first full-on penis photo — a shot of porn star Harry Reems in a…*relaxed* state.

*In The Vatican Sex Manual, Eric Idle and a model demonstrate (clockwise from top left) "The Fred Astaire," "The Papal Bull," "The Trade-Union Congress" and "Ninety-Six"—just a few of the "many thousands of positions in which sex cannot be enjoyed." **Above:** Outtakes from the December 1971 pictorial Personal Visions of the Erotic reveal a fully nude man and woman; in the photo selected for publication, the woman is pictured solo.*

It's a seminal moment for PLAYBOY. Even better, the magazine didn't just publish that groundbreaking photo and then decide it had filled the penis quota for the year: The following issue includes an equally revealing photo of actor Johnny Crawford promoting his appropriately titled flick *The Naked Ape* (which happens to be a Playboy Productions movie).

That this tiny uptick in male nudity comes in the early 1970s is no surprise; porn was pumping into the mainstream, and the so-called pubic wars, in which PLAYBOY and *Penthouse* published raunchier and raunchier images, were raging. By the 1980s, it seems a kinder, gentler era of male nudity had dawned in PLAYBOY, as opposed to the frequently intense sexuality of the 1970s. Dolph Lundgren is like a pale beefy mannequin, more prop than player in his 1985 pictorial with then girlfriend supermodel Grace Jones. In 1986's Double Take, a nude Don Johnson frolics by a waterfall with Melanie Griffith in an outtake captured for a story that had run a decade earlier — a johnson-free Johnson pictorial.

• • •

To get a sense of why certain decisions regarding nude male photography were made in the past, I spoke with Gary Cole, PLAYBOY's longtime photography director, who held the role from 1975 until 2009. He quickly clarified the penis-shy editorial perspective.

"The subhead under the magazine's cover logo read 'Entertainment for Men,' " Cole says. And though the magazine had a generally welcoming attitude regarding all sexual orientations, it's obvious the subhead in question could more accurately have read "Entertainment for Heterosexual Men." Unsurprisingly for the world's preeminent men's magazine, the editors operated "on the assumption that our readers were not particularly interested" in photos of naked men.

"Male nudity was not a subject we dwelled on," Cole adds, "though it was occasionally included in the magazine, especially in features such as Sex in Cinema and *The Year in Sex*."

And he's absolutely right. Flipping through these annual assemblages of film stills and nip slips, I saw a number of stars and leading men naked or close to it: David Bowie, Peter Fonda, Dennis Rodman and Antonio Banderas, to name just a handful, who all appeared alongside plenty of color photography of women celebs and actresses.

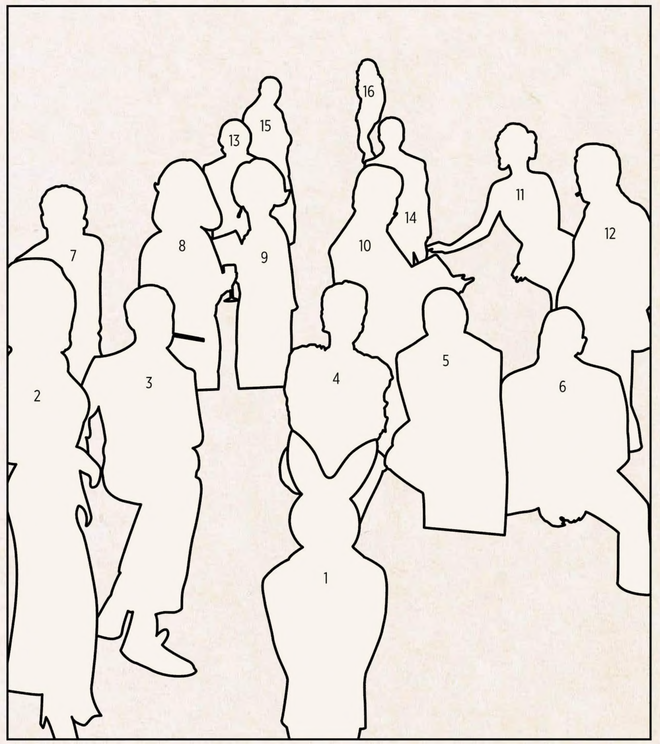
From time to time male skin was also deployed to great comic effect in PLAYBOY. (See, for example, Steve Martin on the January 1980 cover, wearing only a white tux jacket and what might best be described as a diaper, which I guess is sexy to someone, somewhere.) Perhaps the most stellar example I found of nudity in service of hilarity is *The Vatican Sex Manual*. Appearing in the November 1976 issue, the pictorial is actually excerpted from comedian Eric Idle's *Rutland Dirty Weekend Book*, in which the Monty Python star and a female model, both in various states of undress, demonstrate for the camera several amusingly asexual sex positions such as "The Fred Astaire" (butt to butt) and "The Missionary Position" (praying while kneeling on opposite sides of a bed).

"I always loved this gag," Idle tells me via e-mail, "a how notto-have sex manual." He recalls feeling no awkwardness during the photo shoot. "I was fairly accustomed to being nude, as almost everyone swam naked in Provence in the summer in those days. It didn't bother me." (Interesting side note: Idle's wife, Tania Kosevich, is the jeans-shorted September 1974 PLAYBOYcover model.)

It's easy to imagine that if the editors had been as comfortable with the naked male body as Idle was, we might have seen more of it, for the potential benefit of all readers — regardless of sexual orientation or gender identification.

Maybe that time has finally come. The world has seen increased recognition and acceptance of sexual fluidity, and as a culture we're realizing that, yes, sexuality truly is rich and varied. Readers, like the population as a whole, come from across the sexual spectrum, so surely there's a market. Male nudity can be a beautiful thing to so many people — here's to entertainment for *all*. ■

A GALA FOR THE AGES: ANSWER KEY



Mr. Playboy (suave avatar of Playboy founder Hugh Hefner); 2. Barbi Benton (pictorial mainstay and *Playboy After Dark* entertainer who became Hefner's longtime partner and discovered the Los Angeles property that became Playboy Mansion West); 3. Ian Fleming (author and Playboy Interview subject whose James Bond character made several appearances in the magazine); 4. Janet Pilgrim (PLAYBOY s taffer who became a threetime Playmate); 5. Dick Gregory (trailblazing Playboy Club comic); 6. Shel Silverstein (longtime traveling cartoonist and correspondent); 7. Alex Haley (author of the first *Playboy Interview* and the magazine's most famous interviewer); 8. Christie Hefner (CEO of Playboy Enterprises for 20 years); 9. Alice K. Turner (influential longtime PLAYBOY fiction editor); 10. LeRoy Neiman (Femlin creator and PLAYBOY artist in residence); 11. Marilyn Monroe (cover model for the first issue and the magazine's only "Sweetheart of the Month"); 12. Lenny Bruce (comic whose *How to Talk Dirty and Influence People* PLAYBOY serialized in 1963 and 1964); 13. Ray Bradbury (frequent sci-fi contributor whose Fahrenheit 451 was serialized in 1954); 14. Miles Davis (performer at the first Playboy Jazz Fest and subject of the first *Playboy Interview*); 15. Alberto Vargas (pinup artist whose full-page illustrations were an early magazine staple); 16. Pamela Anderson (February 1990 Playmate and most frequent U.S. PLAYBOY cover model).

CLASSIC CARTOONS

"Damn it! Somebody's at the air lock!"

"I'd like to disassociate myself from the remarks of my companions, Miss."

"Our task, ladies and gentlemen, is to convince the American male that driving a small car is no reflection on the size of his genitalia."

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